


English Version 

Rodriac
Copen 

Science Fiction Novel

Memories of a DEAD WORLD

Science Fiction

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under the pseudonym
Rodriac Copen

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SCIENCE FICTION

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Memories Of A Dead World

The Humanity has been resurrected in a world that defies the laws of logic and death itself.

Julius has awakened in the world of Elyndria, where the souls of the deceased seem to find a new purpose. Elyndria is not the paradise that the religions of Earth spoke of. It is a world where people live and die in endless combats and battles, facing humans and hundreds of alien races.

Guided by Solomon, a charismatic general who leads humans in an eternal war, and Lyara, a powerful warrior who questions the reality of that world, Julius begins to doubt whether this second life that someone has granted him is a divine gift or something much more disturbing.

As he tries to adapt to this universe of wonders and conflicts, the three protagonists find shadows hidden behind the perfection of Elyndria, awakening doubts that lead them to search for answers about their true nature and the purpose of their existence in this mysterious place.

If Elyndria is truly a paradise... what price must the resurrected pay to be happy?

1

Awakening in Elyndria



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The first sensation that came to Julius’ mind was that of a strange emptiness. No pain, no heat, just an overwhelming silence that enveloped everything. After the initial awakening came the light, a light so bright that he had to close his eyes in confusion. He blinked several times before realizing that he was lying on a cold, polished marble floor. Above it rose imposing white columns, topped with intricate capitals that seemed to dance in organic, divine shapes. In the background, a golden light streaked through the space as if the sun itself dwelt within that place.

He slowly stood up, feeling the ground with his hands, noticing that his body was not the same. He felt strong, agile, full of a vitality he had not remembered for decades. He looked at his hands: they were fleshy, firm, without wrinkles. They did not have the bony, mottled hands he remembered. He felt his face, searching for the marks of age, the wrinkles, the flaps of skin, but he found none of those.

It was then that a deep, powerful voice broke the silence.

—"You're awake. Welcome to Elyndria, soldier."

Julius turned his head towards the source of the sound and found a man of imposing bearing watching him from the base of a gigantic statue. He wore black armor with gold details and a red cape that fell solemnly. His face was stern, with multiple scars that spoke of battles and confrontations. He had piercing blue eyes.

—"Who are you?" Julius asked, still dizzy from the transition.

—"My name is Solomon. I am the general of the Human House, and you are here because you have crossed the threshold of life."

The words stabbed into Julius's mind like a dagger. Memories began to come in waves: the deathbed, his children crying around him, the feeling of the last breath escaping. He put a hand to his chest, searching for the weight of the illness that had brought him to that final moment, but found nothing.

—"This must be a dream," he muttered.

"It isn't," Solomon replied, approaching with a firm step. His gaze was piercing, almost as if he could read Julius's thoughts.

—"You died in your world, on Earth. Now you are in Elyndria, a place where all the inhabitants of what was your universe arrive after dying."-

Julius was speechless.

—"But this... what is this place? Heaven?"—he asked, looking around. The temple, which had previously seemed Greek, now seemed like something else, as if it combined elements from different cultures and architectural styles that were impossible to classify.

The man identified as Solomon laughed heartily. **"Wow... another Christian."** He shook his head in resignation. **"Heaven doesn't exist. And it's best if you get used to it quickly. After death, there's only this that you see. Elyndria isn't a world, not like the one you knew at least."** Solomon replied, with a slight smile that didn't reach his eyes.

The general continued, **"There are no planets here, no space, no galaxies. This universe is unique, vast, and consists of a single, immense piece of land. This single planet is home to everyone who has ever lived in your universe, regardless of form, race, time, or planetary system."** He paused to let Julius absorb the information.

Julius felt a knot in his stomach.

—"Are my children here? My wife..."-

—"No, not yet." Solomon's voice was firm, but not cruel. **"Those who reach Elyndria are those who have already crossed the threshold. Your kind are still alive on Earth. Wherever Earth is now."**

The thought hit him like an icy wave. His children, his grandchildren, were still there, mourning him.

—"And what am I doing here?"— he asked at last, with a hint of desperation.

—"Live, fight... and die."- Solomon crossed his arms. **—"Elyndria is not a paradise, Julius."**

There is no eternal rest here. This is a world of conflict and purpose. You have been recruited to join the human troops. In this place, each resurrected race has its own home, its own battles." - He paused. —**"Elyndria is the universe where you will experience violence, pain, combat, battles and heroism."** -

—"Combat? Battles? You want me to fight?"
Julius asked, incredulously.

-"Understand this, Julius: I'm not the one who sets the rules here." - Solomon gestured with his hands. **-"In Elyndria, the concept of what you knew as God is radically different from that of Earth. We know that He is not a person, and that He is linked to the natural order of all universes or cosmos that exist. We call Him 'The Source', or perhaps you prefer 'The Flow'."** - He tried to find a phrase to continue the description. **-"It is... inherent to everything created in the universes that exist. He is the one who sets the paths for us. It is up to us to walk them. Or at least that is what we are told."** - He finished ironically.

Solomon continued to explain, "From what we've been told, each universe has been created for us to experience some scenarios. Here, it's violence. War is inevitable in Elyndria. But don't worry, you'll learn quickly. Here, humans are not like on Earth. Here, we are the most feared and respected warriors of all races. Human ferocity is known throughout Elyndria. You will be part of something bigger than you ever imagined." The general smiled ferociously.

Julius looked at his hands again, feeling the strength coursing through them. Looking down at his arms, he saw powerful muscles and thick tendons. Disbelief still filled him, but a part of him, a part that didn't understand, felt a strange urge.

—"What happens if I refuse?"— he asked, more out of curiosity than conviction.

Solomon let out a slight laugh, dry and humorless.

—"You cannot refuse, Julius. In Elyndria, war finds us all, sooner or later. Just like death. The only question is whether you will be ready when it comes." He shrugged his shoulders as if he didn't care too much about the matter. "You

can always let yourself be killed like a lamb." He looked him straight in the eyes. **"But you will not learn anything from that. You will stagnate your evolution."**

The general finished his explanations, turned around and began to walk towards a huge door at the back of the temple.

—"Follow me. There is much to learn and little time before your first battle." Solomon gestured for Julius to follow. Julius looked at the entrance with a mix of fear and doubt. His life on Earth was over, but in Elyndria, it seemed like it was just beginning.

Solomon seemed to read her thoughts. He said, **"There are no children or births here. When you die, you are embodied in an adult form in resurrection temples like this one."** He pointed to the building they were leaving behind.

As they walked away from the building, they walked across a vast, endless plain. In the distance, they saw rugged mountains and a rushing river. Solomon explained that human settlements were fortified cities that stood as bastions of power. The inhabi-

tants of Elyndria, resurrected from the same original universe as Earth, carried a military aesthetic according to their original traditions.

In the case of the Human House, they had been inspired by Roman armies: they wore polished bronze armor, ornate shields, and flowing capes. Julius realized that there was no gender distinction. On the battlefields, men and women were warriors, forged to fight from the moment they awoke.

Combat was at the core of existence. Swords, daggers, and spears were the tools of their trade, and though the weapons were primitive, the warriors of the Human House wielded them with a skill that transcended the human. Armor was designed for mobility and protection, and each one I saw was unique, reflecting the history and universe from which its wearer came.

He saw no weapons of mass destruction, no artillery, no advanced warfare technology. Solomon told him that the confrontations were hand-to-hand, fierce and bloody. There was no gunpowder. Only bladed weapons were allowed. There was no disease in Elyndria, and no children. Every inhabi-

tant was resurrected as an adult, fully formed and prepared for the brutal reality of the universe.

The two men walked through a military camp, surrounded by tents and training warriors. The air was thick with the shouts of practice and the sounds of clashing metal.

Julius looked around disoriented - **"This is... impressive. And terrifying. I don't understand how I got here, Solomon. The last time I breathed, I was in my bed, my children were crying. I was old, weak... And now this?"** -

Solomon answered calmly, in his deep voice. **"Elyndria is a universe beyond the one you knew. Time does not exist here as you understood it on Earth. There is no past or future, only now."** He smiled. **"You will not grow old, my friend."** Time, as a concept, was meaningless; the seasons did not change, warriors did not age, and death meant the transition to another universe and other experiences.

Julius frowned. **"How can that be? On Earth, everything was marked by the passing of days, by clocks, by the years that steal youth."**

Solomon chuckled softly. "That is an illusion of your old life, Julius. On Earth you evolved through the years. Here you do so through confrontation. We do not age, we do not count the days because there are no days to count. Elyndria is eternal. Time does not advance because it has nowhere to go."

Julius looked at his young, strong hands. "But... my death? Was it real?"

Solomon paused for a moment to look directly at him. "Yes, it was real. And here you are, reborn in a new body. But don't forget this: dying here is real too. The difference is that here we are told that death in Elyndria is not the end; only the portal to another universe."

Julius asked, flustered, "So what's the point of all this? Fighting? Dying? Only to wake up somewhere else and repeat it all over again?"

Solomon smiled wistfully. "The question you ask is one we all ask at the beginning. Perhaps there is no answer, or perhaps the answer is simply to experiment. Elyndria is not a place of rest, Julius. It is a testing ground. Here we face

chaos, ourselves, and learn what we could not understand in our previous lives." He paused to think . "Perhaps each universe was created to grow in different ways. That is something The Source has never revealed. At least, not here."

Julius looked at the warriors, men and women who were training hard - "And they... know all this?"

-

Solomon nodded. "They know it, and they accept it. You will too. There is no disease here, no hunger, no aging. Only death by combat. But that death is not a punishment; it is a path."

Julius took a deep breath. "On Earth, we feared death. Here, it seems everyone embraces it."

Solomon said wisely, "Because there is no other way to live in Elyndria. Prepare yourself well, Julius. Soon you will be one of them too. If you are a good warrior, you will last a few years. Otherwise, your death will be quick."

Julius replied, **"Then teach me to fight, Solomon. If death awaits me, I want to face it standing, not begging like a coward."**

Solomon smiled with satisfaction. **"Well said. Here, only those who fight find their purpose. This is your tent. Make yourself comfortable, I'll see you later."**

The camp was bustling with activity. Numerous warriors were training with swords and spears, while others were sharpening their weapons or repairing armor. Julius, dressed in his new gear, walked around curiously, observing the faces and dynamics of this strange new place.

As he skirted one of the quieter areas of the camp, he heard laughter and hushed voices. Following the sound, he came upon a group of locals, among whom stood out Lyara, a tall, beautiful woman with a firm posture, dressed in light armor decorated with details evoking branches and leaves. She carried a short sword, very similar to those of the Hellenic warriors of Earth, and a dagger held at her waist. On her left shoulder she carried a bag with

herbs and bandages. Her face, although beautiful, was marked by a serious expression.

Julius paused for a moment, struck by the woman's beauty. Somewhat nervously, he said, **"Excuse me... I don't want to interrupt, but I got lost among so many shops. This place is a labyrinth."**

Lyara looked him up and down, frowning slightly . **"You're new. I can tell by the way you're wearing your gear."**

Julius looked at his own armor - **"That obvious?"**
-

Lyara crossed her arms -**"Very obvious."**- She smiled a little mockingly as she fixed the equipment with her own hands while saying -**"The straps of the breastplate are too loose, and you wear the sword as if it were an ornament."**-

Julius laughed uncomfortably. **"Well, I guess you got me. I have no idea how any of this works."**

Lyara gestured towards the center of the camp - **"Go to the forge, they can adjust it. Al-**

though..." - She looked at him carefully - "If you don't know how to handle a weapon, a well-fitted armor won't save you." -

Julius gave an exaggerated bow - **"Thank you for the advice... nameless warrior?" -**

Lyara seemed amused and tried to answer without changing her serious expression - **"I am Lyara. And I am not only a warrior. I also heal those who are lucky enough to survive the battles. I am the medic of this camp." -**

Julius commented trying to flatter her - **"Ah, a healer. So you don't just deal blows, you also repair them. Interesting combination." - He smiled widely - "I'm Julius, newcomer." -**

Lyara returned the greeting and gave him a warning she gave to all newcomers - **"We all fight here. But some of us have certain roles based on our past. In the 21st century on Earth, I was a medic, hence the healer. If you want to survive in Elyndria, you better learn to defend yourself quickly. There is no room for the weak."**

Julius replied in amazement, **"Oh. I was from the 21st century too. Electronic. I'm still shocked by the reality of this world... or universe."**

Lyara showed a surprised expression. **"Interesting past. I'm interested in talking to you. Try not to die soon."** She finished harshly, but with a slight glint of ironic humor in her eyes.

Julius looked at her impressed - **"You're quite direct. I like that."** -

Lyara started to take a step to leave. **"You don't need to like me... for now. Just learn to defend yourself. If you ever end up in my shop with an injury, you'll realize that not everyone here gets second chances."**

Julius followed her with his gaze. **"Has Elyndria always been this harsh?"**

Lyara paused briefly to look at him over her shoulder. **"Do you always ask so many questions?"** She smiled and gestured for him to follow her so they could walk together.

Julius hurried after her with a smile. **"Only when I find something interesting."** He replied happily.

As they walked through the rows of tents and smoking forges of the camp, Julius could not contain his curiosity. Solomon's words, while enlightening, had barely scratched the surface of this vast and intriguing universe. With a questioning look, he turned to Lyara, who walked beside him with a confident gait and an expressionless face.

—**"What is Elyndria really?"**— Julius asked, breaking the silence.

Lyara watched him briefly before answering, answering as if she were reciting something she had already explained many times.

—**"Elyndria is where we end up after dying on old Earth, but it's not just for humans. It's home to every human and non-human race that ever existed in the universe we came from."**

Julius frowned, processing those words. **"Non-human races?"** he asked.

—"Yes," Lyara continued, without stopping. "There are more than two hundred different races here. Many of them had morphologies and cultures you never imagined. Humans, Arcadians, Pleiadians, Zoolots... and those are just a few."

—"Pleiadians? Zoolotes?"— Julius repeated, incredulously.

Lyara nodded slightly. "Each of these races belongs to a warrior house. They are all led by figures that, in the old universe, would be considered mythological. In our case, humans, we are led by Logos."

Julius paused for a moment, his eyes wide. "Logos? You mean...?"

—"The Son of Man."— Lyara said, interrupting him— "Jesus, or the Messiah if you prefer to call him that. He has many names, but here we know him as Logos. He represents our race and leads our battles."-

Julius didn't know what to say. He had spent his entire life believing in certain things about the afterli-

fe, but none of this fit into those ideas. **"What about humans? How are we regarded here?"** he finally asked.

Lyara stopped, turning to look directly at him. **"We are the fiercest warriors in Elyndria. Because of our ferocity, loyalty, and sense of honor, the other races respect us... or fear us. Solomon is an example of that, and that is why Logos has given him leadership over the human troops."**

Julius nodded slowly, though his mind was filled with questions. Everything in this world seemed to defy the logic he knew, but it also fascinated him. As they continued walking, he couldn't help but feel like he was barely scratching the surface of a much larger mystery.



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2 The Conflicts Of Elyndria

Julius was introduced by Solomon to the human camp, a place where newcomers learned to adapt to life in Elyndria. Solomon also led him to the hospital tent of Lyara, the group's healer. She, who had already met him, greeted him again and offered him useful advice on how to assimilate his new reality and how to cope with the training at the camp.

During initial training, Solomon spoke to him in a firm voice, as he watched Julius adjust his equipment. **"Listen, Julius, this isn't just about strength. If you want to survive and become a true warrior, you must learn to use your mind as well as your body."**

Julius was a little nervous, looking at the group of soldiers training. **"I'll try, but I've never done anything like this before. In my previous life... I was a simple worker, I didn't use weapons or physical force."**

Solomon crossed his arms, serious. **"Here, actions are what define who you are. Listen carefully to the instructors. It is not enough to hear,**

you must understand. Every word, every detail of what you are taught, is a tool that could save your life."-

Julius nodded slowly. "What if I don't understand something?"

Solomon put a hand on his shoulder. "Then watch. Demonstrations are just as important as instructions. Watch how they execute each maneuver. Study your teammates' movements, their stances, how they anticipate their opponents. Don't be afraid to ask questions, but don't expect everything to be handed to you. Here, learning quickly is the key."

Julius sighed, nodding, "And then what?"

Solomon told him, "Then repeat. Practice with your partner until these movements are as natural as breathing. You will make mistakes at first, but every mistake is a lesson. Your body must naturalize the movements of defense and attack."

Julius, with a hint of uncertainty and more determination, replied: **"Understood... I hope I don't disappoint you."**

Solomon stared at him. **"You will not. When I came here, like you, I was a man of peace. It is not me you must impress, Julius. It is yourself. The fight here is for your life, not my approval. Now go and learn quickly to stay alive."**

He was paired with a partner to pretend to be opponents in combat exercises. Instructors taught him basic techniques to practice. Julius and his partner rehearsed for several hours. Despite his efforts, he felt awkward and out of place.

As the final match of the day came, the pairs simulated a full-on duel. In the midst of the tension of the confrontation, Julius attempted a bold maneuver, but his foot slipped on the uneven ground just as his opponent launched a sword attack. In an unfortunate twist of fate, the weapon reached his right arm, causing a cut that, while not serious, was painful and bleeding considerably.

Solomon, upon noticing the incident, ordered Julius to be immediately taken to Lyara's tent. There, the

healer greeted him with an understanding look and expert hands, dedicating herself to cleaning and bandaging his wound while reminding him that mistakes were part of learning.

Lyara tended to him carefully, cleaning the wound on his arm before beginning to stitch it up. As she worked, she gave him a reassuring smile.

—"Don't worry, Julius. Here in Elyndria, wounds heal much faster than on Earth. It's one of the few advantages of this place," he commented while applying an ointment to the cut.

Julius watched her curiously. Although his arm still hurt, the calm in Lyara's voice relaxed him.

—"It's... different from what I remember on Earth. I didn't feel too much pain. And I'm sure that a wound like that back there would have put me out of action for weeks. Here, I'm sure I can keep fighting even right now."

Lyara laughed softly as she threaded the needle.

—"That's right, things work differently here. The bodies are prepared for battle. You will

understand it in time. Elyndria has its own rules, even if we can't always understand them."

As he closed the wound with a suture with skillful movements, he continued speaking, his tone now more serious.

—"Let me tell you something. This world... is marked by endless conflicts between the races that inhabit it. Humans, Zoolots, Pleiadians and many other species, always fighting. But humans, Julius, have a special role here."

-"Special? What do you mean?"- He asked, intrigued.

Lyara looked up for a moment, as if searching for the right words.

—"Humans are considered the most exceptional warriors of Elyndria. Our species is, according to Logos, renowned for its ferocity, loyalty, and a spirit that never gives up."

Julius frowned thoughtfully.

—"That sounds... flattering, but also dangerous. Doesn't that mean we're doomed to always fight?"

Lyara nodded, a shadow of sadness in her eyes.

—"That's true. But as far as we know, that's true for everyone who inhabits Elyndria. And it's also something that many of us question. But in the rules of war that we follow, there is one exception. Humans almost never fight with the Pleadians. There is a close relationship between our races, a kind of mutual understanding."

—"At camp they told me that our territory borders that of the zoolotes. What's up with them?"— He asked, intrigued.

Lyara sighed deeply before answering.

—"They are ferocious. Anthropomorphs of almost two meters, with copper-colored skin and enormous eyes. Their strength is impressive, but they have a defect: they are clumsy and slow to react. This gives them a great disadvantage in combat."

Julius tilted his head, processing the information.

—"Why do we fight with them? What do we gain from this constant struggle?"

Lyara finished suturing the wound and placed a bandage on Julius's arm. Then she looked him straight in the eyes.

—"That, Julius, is one of the great questions of Elyndria. A question we should all ask ourselves more often. But here, war is not just a fight for territory or power. It is something deeper."

Lyara explained that since the beginning of the existence of the universes, Logos had been the mediator between the Source and the inhabitants of the universe of Elyndria. And according to the word of Logos, The Source had decreed that all living beings should evolve by incarnating in lives that took place in various universes. In the universe where the Earth existed, the evolution of beings was through time, gradual maturation and understanding of things. In Elyndria, evolution was experienced through physical effort, pain and loss through the death of friends and acquaintances.

When Lyara finished bandaging him, Julius looked at the impeccable work on his arm, but his mind was absorbed in her words.

—**"Maybe one day we'll discover the truth of all this,"** he murmured, more to himself than to her.

Lyara gave him a look full of empathy and nodded slowly. **"Maybe, Julius. Maybe."**

Julius slowly rose from the makeshift stretcher, moving his arm carefully. Although he could feel the pull of his stitches, he was in better condition than he had imagined.

—**"Thank you, Lyara. You're incredibly good at this,"** he said, offering her a grateful smile.

She picked up the medical supplies, avoiding his gaze.

—**"It's my job. Here, wounds don't wait, neither those of the body nor those of the soul."**

Julius cocked his head, intrigued by her comment. But instead of pressing her, he decided to change his tone.

—"You know, I was thinking of inviting you to my shop. I have some food, or at least what they call food here. It would be nice not to eat alone for once."

Lyara looked at him with a mix of surprise and doubt. —"I don't think that's a good idea."-

—"Why not?"— He insisted. —"It's just dinner, nothing more. I promise not to bother you or talk about war wounds."—

She hesitated thoughtfully, her fingers playing nervously with the hem of her waistcoat. Finally, she let out a sigh and nodded, albeit with some resignation.

—"It's okay, but don't get used to it."

When they reached Julius's tent, he laid out what he had: some rye bread, a hot stew, and water in canteens.

"It's not a feast, but it's the best I could muster," Julius said, serving a portion for both of them.

Lyara sat cautiously, her posture showing some tension through a rigid posture, as if she were uncom-

fortable or trying to maintain an invisible barrier between them.

—"I don't usually do this," he admitted as he took a sip of water. **"I don't like to mingle too much with the soldiers."**

Julius raised an eyebrow, curious. **"May I ask why?"**

She was silent for a few moments before answering. When she did, Julius thought her voice was filled with a suppressed sadness.

—"Because I did it once, Julius. I got involved with a soldier named Horatio. He was strong, brave... and I was convinced he would survive anything. But he didn't. I lost him in a fight, and since then... I try not to get too close to anyone."

Julius looked at her seriously, letting her words sink into the air.

—"I'm so sorry, Lyara. I really am. But... I don't think it's good for anyone to lock themselves away out of fear of the future."

She looked at him with a sweet gaze that for a moment revealed pain and some frustration.

—"What do you know about the future, Julius?" His tone was not confrontational. It was not Lyara's wish to argue with Julius. She seemed to be reasoning with herself. **—"In this world, we all die too quickly. What's the point of risking feeling something if loss is almost inevitable?"**

Julius took a sip of water, then set the canteen aside.

—"Because if we stop living out of fear of the future, we're already dead, Lyara. I know, I may be new here, but I've learned something these days: all we have is this moment. And no matter how much we prepare to fight, humans need each other."-

Lyara looked at him, pleasantly surprised by his words. For the first time in a long time, someone understood her, or at least tried to. Julius spoke to her not as a warrior, but as a human.

The silence stretched out as they both ate, until Julius leaned slightly towards her.

—"Thank you for agreeing to come. I really needed it."

Lyara smiled slightly, though her gaze was still filled with caution.

—"Maybe me too."-

Without thinking too much, Julius moved a little closer. His gaze sought out Lyara's, and on impulse, he kissed her softly. It was a brief kiss, almost fearful, but full of meaning.

Lyara didn't pull away, though when the kiss ended, she looked at him seriously.

—"Julius, this is not a good idea."-

—"Maybe it isn't, but it doesn't seem like a bad thing either," he replied, with a small smile .
"Don't you think?"

Lyara didn't answer, but for the first time in years, the possibility of something more seemed less terrifying than before.

A week after his wound was stitched, Julius had already proven his worth in training. Although his

body still felt the after-effects of the initial fight, his movements were precise and fluid. However, he was not prepared for what was to come: his first real confrontation.

One evening, the camp drums sounded urgently. Solomon gathered the soldiers in the center of the settlement.

—"The zoolotes have crossed our borders," he announced in a firm voice, his presence imposing respect. **"They have sacked one of our villages to the south. We cannot allow them to advance any further."** Looking at Julius, who was near him, he said, **"This will be your first battle. Show what you have learned. Don't die."**

Julius's heart pounded. As much as he tried to remain calm, the prospect of facing a six-foot-tall creature with eyes like dark pools made him shudder.

The battlefield was a vast plain bathed in the dim light of Elyndria's three suns. The zoolots advanced like a wave of destruction: huge, their copper-colored hides shining like bronze in the light. Their

weapons, crude and deadly, pounded the ground as they emitted growls that reverberated in the air.

The fight was fierce. Julius, with his short sword in hand, rushed with his companions into the chaos. The roars of the zoolots mixed with the screams of the humans, the clash of steel and the whistling of spears.

At a crucial moment, Julius saw a zoolote raise its massive sword to charge at two human soldiers who had stumbled. Without hesitation, Julius charged at the creature, striking it in the knee to unbalance it. The zoolote fell, but not before delivering a swipe that sent Julius sprawling. Though stunned, he managed to get up in time to plunge his sword into the beast's neck, ending its threat.

—**"Come on, get back into formation!"** He shouted, helping the soldiers to their feet.

When the battle was over, the humans stood victorious, though casualties had been heavy. The enemies had retreated. The bodies of the fallen humans lay beside the zoolots in a tragic mosaic of bravery and violence. Julius, though exhausted and wounded again, had proven himself a brave warrior.

Suddenly, everything went black for Julius and he lost consciousness.

When he opened his eyes, the suns of Elyndria were upon him. He had no way of knowing how much time had passed. Shading his hands, he tried to get back on the battlefield. Other humans were in the same situation. During the blackout, or whatever it was, the bodies of the fallen, both zoolots and humans, had disappeared.

Stunned, he could only ask other warriors about what had happened. They all told him that fainting was common after every confrontation. They called it ' ***The Sleep of Death***'. And no one knew what or who collected the bodies of those killed in combat. It had been that way for centuries and it continued to be that way today.

That evening, as a reward for his bravery, Solomon invited him to dinner.

—"You've earned it, Julius. Come to my tent. And bring Lyara if you can convince her," he said with a slight smile, something unusual for him.

Julius persuaded Lyara, who reluctantly agreed to attend. Solomon's tent was more spacious than the others, with maps spread out on a table and a brazier softly lighting the place. A simple meal was ready: hot stew, porridge, and freshly baked bread.

—**"Congratulations, Julius,"** Solomon said as he served stew on the guests' plates. **"Not everyone shows such camaraderie in their first battle. Many only think about surviving."**

—**"I couldn't let my companions die,"** Julius replied as he took his plate. **"I couldn't forgive myself."**

Lyara nodded, though she remained silent at first, watching Solomon curiously as he seemed to ponder aloud. Julius asked her if she knew anything about the mass fading of soldiers at the end of the battle. About '*The Dream of Death*'.

-**"We know no more than what you've seen... neither we, nor the other races know what happens after battles. Or who collects the bodies of the dead. Or why. When we ask, Logos answers evasively or simply says it is the *will of The Source*."** He tried to find the right words for a few

seconds before finishing the thought. **"This world... is fascinating and strange at the same time."** Solomon said, looking at the brazier.

—**"What exactly do you mean?"** Julius asked, interested.

Solomon put his spoon down on his plate, lacing his fingers together.

—**"Before I came here on Earth, I was a computer programmer. I worked with virtual simulations and sometimes, in the design of artificial worlds. Elyndria... reminds me of something of that."**-

—**"Do you think this world might not be real? A virtual simulation?"**— Lyara asked, raising an eyebrow.

—**"I'm not saying it's not real. It doesn't seem virtual to me. It's just that its origin... might not be as natural as we're led to believe. Think about it: resurrections, such a defined system of rules. Why do bodies disappear after battles? What's the reason for the fading? Is there something we shouldn't know? There are so**

many unanswered questions. A Messiah-Logos very different from his version on Earth... The relationship of his coexistence with Maria Magdalena. It all seems like carefully designed madness... like a virtual reality program or game."-

Julius frowned thoughtfully. "What about resurrections?"

—"Just like in our life on Earth, no one here knows that someone who died in Elyndria has been reincarnated in another universe. Like on Earth... there is no proof of anything. Should we just believe in what Logos says... like that, nothing more? What intrigues me the most is... What are we really here? Are we ourselves or simple copies of who we were on Earth?"— Solomon sighed, while his gaze was lost in the flames of the brazier. —"I have no answers, but every day I find more questions."-

Solomon continued to explain his doubts to Julius and Lyara. As he remembered from his days on Earth, he was not a brave enough being to become commander of all human forces. His resurrected

body was completely different from the one he remembered from Earth. Solomon, unlike Julius, had not died old. He had died in his youth. And the body he had in Elyndria was very different from the one he had on Earth. He felt the same way about his personality. Solomon felt that he was something like an "*upgraded version*" of his version on Earth.

Lyara crossed her arms, though her expression showed some discomfort.

—"What if we just accepted what is? Elyndria gives us a second chance. Maybe that's enough."

Julius leaned forward, his eyes fixed on Solomon.

—"Whether this is a program or a design, do you think it matters? What we do here, what we feel, the lives we save... it's still real to us."

Solomon smiled slightly as he reasoned. —"No Julius. We are living an *implanted* life . Imposed on us by someone else. No one in their right mind would want to live a life like the one we live here."- He ran his hand through his hair, as if preparing a better argument —"On Earth, before

my death, humanity had reached a strange milestone in its obsession with technology. We had developed something called '*the Archive of Souls*'"-

Lyara frowned, clearly confused. "The Archive of Souls?"

Solomon nodded. "It was an ambitious project. It was supposed to store memories, personalities, and everything that made a human being unique. The idea was to preserve the consciousness of all human beings, even after death, in a virtual world."

—"A virtual world?" Julius repeated, intrigued.

—"Exactly. A space where people would live again, interact, as if real life continued, but in holography, completely dependent on machines. It was a perfect simulation... at least in theory. In a way it would give us virtual immortality."

Lyara seemed to grow restless, her body tensing. "And what does that have to do with Elyndria?"

Solomon looked at them both with an intensity that made the weight of his thoughts evident. **“I think this world...”** He paused, as if he doubted what he was about to say. **“It could be related to that project. Maybe Elyndria isn’t a spiritual place or a parallel dimension, as many believe. Maybe it’s an extension of the Archive of Souls.”**

—**“Are you saying this is a simulation?”** Julius asked, incredulously.

—**“But not virtual. I don’t know for sure, to be honest. I suspect.”** Solomon replied. **“But there are too many coincidences. The resurrections in enhanced versions of ourselves, the rules that seem immutable, the way some of us have vivid memories and others, just fragments.”**

Lyara pursed her lips, crossing her arms in a skeptical expression. **“That doesn’t explain the Pleiadians or the Zoolots. They’re not human.”**

—**“That’s true,”** Solomon admitted. **“But if the Archive managed to evolve beyond what we imagined, perhaps someone was able to create an artificial intelligence that worked with spe-**

cies other than humans. Or perhaps these races were somehow integrated into the system."

Julius interrupted him, confused. "What about us reincarnated people? What do you think we are?"

Solomon looked at him with a mixture of sadness and fascination.

—"I think we, I mean the 'resurrected' ones in this world, might be real, in the sense that our original minds were transferred here. Transferred into these enhanced bodies. And this can be a great testing ground to test our new versions."

Lyara stood up, visibly shaken. "That's too much. We're not machines. We're people, Solomon. We feel, we love, we fight... What difference does it make if this is an archive or not?"

—"I'm not saying that we're not real in our experience," Solomon replied calmly. —"But if we understand the true origin of Elyndria, we might understand the purpose of all this. Why are we here? Why do we fight? Why are we for-

ced to be experts in weapons?" He waited a few seconds before continuing. —"My experience with human robotics always led me to understand that prototypes of robots for military use were sought. That was always a priority for humanity. And I can't help but think that this universe of Elyndria looks a lot like a large military robot factory."

Julius remained silent, absorbing what he had just heard. Finally, he spoke.

—"So, according to you, Elyndria might not be a divine place, but an experiment. A testing ground for infantry soldiers. And what do we gain from knowing that?"

Solomon smiled weakly.

—"Maybe nothing. Maybe everything. But I can't help but question it. If this is a system, someone or something must be behind it. And that could change everything."

The conversation hung in the air, leaving Julius and Lyara with more questions than answers. As they said their goodbyes to return to their tents, Julius

couldn't help but think of Solomon's words. If Elyndria was a testing ground, what did that mean to them? Were they simply data running in a system? As Lyara had said, did that even matter?

—"Maybe you're right, Julius, Lyara. Maybe it doesn't matter how we got here, but what we do while we're here."- She paused -"But I can't stop wondering, what if this isn't the work or will of 'The Source'? What if this is the work of humans or some alien race? And most importantly... what if we die and there's nothing after this?"-

Solomon's words hung in the air, planting a seed of doubt and curiosity in Julius's mind. And that night, as they retreated to their tents, Julius couldn't help but look up at the sky of Elyndria and wonder how deep the mystery of this world was. Under the starry sky of Elyndria, Julius didn't find the answers, but his mind was more awake than ever.

A woman with long dark hair adorned with white flowers is seated at a wooden desk. She is wearing a blue and green classical-style dress with a gold belt and jewelry. Her right hand rests on her chin in a pensive pose, while her left hand is on a computer keyboard. The desk holds a CRT monitor displaying a landscape with a classical building, a keyboard, and a mouse. In the background, a window shows a view of a classical building and cypress trees. A circular logo in the top right corner contains the text 'Rodriac Copen' and a quill pen.

Rodriac
Copen

3 Shadows Of An Artificial Resurrection

Several months had passed since Julius had arrived in Elyndria. His evolution as a warrior was impressive; not only had he adapted to the relentless pace of training and combat, but he led a small group of soldiers under his command. The responsibility of guiding his men had given him a renewed sense of purpose, and his skills with bladed weapons had become a topic of admiration among his comrades. Julius handled the sword with lethal precision, as if the very land of Elyndria had molded him for that role.

Despite his apparent acceptance of the new reality, a restlessness plagued him in his moments of solitude. Solomon's words echoed in his mind like persistent echoes. 'We are different here... This reality may not be what it seems.' Julius couldn't help but wonder if there was any truth to those speculations. The days in Elyndria were intense, the older soldiers not noticing any biological changes that indicated aging. Wounds, even the most serious, healed at a miraculous speed.

'How can I be so good with a sword in such a short time?' In his days on Earth he didn't remember being so skilled or strong. Perhaps what Solomon said was true: they were born there already prepared with all the mental and physical baggage to be soldiers. Julius mentally reviewed the movements of his last battle. On Earth he had never received military training, and yet, each blow he gave seemed natural, as if an unknown force guided him. That thought disturbed and fascinated him at the same time.

During one of the nights at camp, as he sharpened his sword by the fire, he observed his men. Each of them was an example of skill and determination, but there was something strange about their behavior, something Julius couldn't explain. They seemed too perfect, so focused, as if they had been designed to fulfill a specific purpose. It was as if the diversity of human society there didn't exist. There were no weaklings, no sick people. Much less depressed people. He remembered Solomon's stories about the ***'Archive of Souls'*** and the theories about the artificiality of Elyndria.

An alarm was ringing in his brain. *'What if he's right?'* he wondered as he watched the flames dance. That idea had begun to germinate in his mind, and although he didn't dare to talk about it with others, the doubt had already taken root.

Julius had been trained by Lyara to heal wounds, a skill he began to apply with dedication whenever the opportunity presented itself. He often helped her along with other volunteers when there were many wounded in the camp after fighting. Lyara, using her advanced knowledge of medicine and human anatomy, had requested that the weapon smiths make a set of high-precision surgical instruments, which made a great difference in her work as a healer.

Over time, the relationship between Julius and Lyara had stabilized, reaching an intimacy that surpassed the common bonds in Elyndria. They now shared the tent, living together as a couple. Julius had found in Lyara a refuge amidst the chaos of the world around them, while she, despite her initial resistance, had learned to trust him and to let herself be carried away by what she felt. Their coexistence

had become a necessary respite in an environment of constant war.

One night, Lyara and Julius were resting together in the tent after making love. Lyara was curled up next to him and Julius had his arms around her. She turned to the man, resting her head on his bare chest, and began to share something she had kept to herself until then.

—"Julius."— She whispered, gently caressing his skin —"**There's something I want to tell you.**"-

He, intrigued, looked down at her and encouraged her to continue with a slight nod.

—"My closeness to Logos is no coincidence. **He trusts me... more than he trusts others. And it is for a very specific reason,**" he said in a voice full of doubts that he seemed to have kept for a long time.

Julius sat up slightly, propping himself up on one elbow to get a better look at her. "**What do you mean?**" he asked curiously .

Lyara took a breath before answering. **“Logos confessed to me a few years ago that my lineage comes from a sacred place, the Holy Land. My blood is directly linked to the original Messiah... the one who walked among men in the world we left behind.”**

Lyara's words echoed through the tent with a gravity that made Julius stare at her in amazement. **“The Messiah?”** He repeated, incredulous. **“Are you saying you're a direct descendant...?”**

—**“That's what Logos believes,”** she interrupted, avoiding eye contact momentarily. **“That's why he tried to woo me and make me his consort back when I was involved with Horatio.”** She paused. **“It seems that in his bed he only trusts people close to his lineage.”**

Julius remained silent, processing what he had just heard. Finally, he asked, **“Did something happen between you two?”**

-“I never paid attention to his claims. And he was quite annoying for a long time. During that time Horatio died on the battlefield.”- Lyara tried to remember the sequence. **-“His death was**

sudden, in an almost unimportant skirmish. Witnesses say that Horatio suddenly seemed to freeze. And they killed him."-

Lyara made a wistful gesture and snuggled closer to him.

—"After Horatio's death, Logos continued to try to get me to move into his palace. When he was convinced of my refusal, he sought the arms of his current consort."

The conversation left Julius thoughtful while Lyara closed her eyes.

As the conversation on the tent bed continued, Lyara decided to reveal more details about Logos' inner circle. With a deep sigh and a certain caution in her gaze, she spoke while her fingers absentmindedly played with the folds of the blanket that covered them.

—"There's something else that might surprise you, Julius," she said, glancing at him . "Logos' consort... is no ordinary woman. She is someone who also comes from the sacred tales of Earth."

Julius, intrigued, leaned towards her.

—"Who is it?"— he asked, anticipating that the answer might be something extraordinary.

Lyara paused before answering, as if trying to find the right words.

"It is Maria Magdalena," he said finally. "The same Maria Magdalena of whom the Scriptures spoke, the prostitute who followed Jesus. Now she is here, in Elyndria, as the consort of Logos."

The revelation left Julius speechless for a moment. Lyara continued, her tone soft but laced with admiration.

—"Since I arrived here, I have had the opportunity to get to know her. We get along very well, in fact. She is an incredible woman, with a strength that few possess. She herself told me how she was chosen by Logos to be his consort. For that reason, she is exempt from fighting in battles. Her role is different... more carnal, within the palace. She is Logos'... woman."-

Julius nodded slowly, trying to process what he was hearing.

—"Did he ever tell you what his life is like with Logos?"— He asked, curious.

Lyara smiled slightly as she recalled the conversations she had had with Maria Magdalena.

—"Yes, she described him to me. She says he doesn't have much in common with the Jesus of Earth. He doesn't resemble him physically or mentally. His relationship with Logos is more of an unbridled passion."- He let out a knowing laugh. **-"Maria Magdalena says that Logos talks a lot about the responsibilities of leading and protecting his people, but that his role reminds her of what her life was like on Earth. She told me that Logos is not as distant as he seems to us; with her, he is... very human."-**

Julius looked at her in wonder, marveling at the depth of the bonds and stories that were woven in Elyndria.

"It's curious," the man finally said. **"To think that here, in such a different world, those figu-**

res we knew as myths have lives, feelings...
What else could there be behind all this?"

Lyara sighed, sharing his uncertainty.

—"Elyndria is full of mysteries, Julius. And I think we've only just begun to understand them."

A few days later, in a terrible battle against the zoolotes, the field was littered with wounded and corpses. After surviving the *'Sleep of the Dead'*, Julius joined Lyara and other volunteers in the healing efforts, tending to the numerous soldiers fighting for their lives. In the midst of this chaos, Lyara found a man with a gruesome wound on the occipital region of his skull.

Examining him carefully, she noticed something unusual. In the skull bone, right where the wound was deepest, there was a small metal device embedded in the bone. Its thin filaments seemed to extend into the bone interior, sinking deeper into the head. It was the first wound the healer had treated in that region of the skull. Lyara frowned and, with steady hands, brought a scalpel forged in the camp forge closer to investigate. As soon as the metal of

the scalpel touched the device, a small spark erupted from it, causing the wounded man to flinch and emit a weak moan of pain.

The man put a hand to his skull, dizzy, before falling unconscious. Lyara was paralyzed for a moment, amazed at what she had just witnessed. She immediately called Julius, who was tending to other wounded nearby. Upon arriving, Lyara quickly explained what had happened, showing him the strange metal piece embedded in the man's skull.

A few minutes later, the wounded man regained consciousness, but something was not right. As Julius and Lyara asked him basic questions to assess his condition, they discovered that he had lost all memory from his resurrection in Elyndria to the moment of the spark. He could not remember his training, nor the battles he had participated in over the past five years. Confused and disoriented, the man tried to understand where he was and why he was injured. Julius, who had once been an electronics technician on Earth, watched with concern and quietly commented to Lyara:

—"This feels like some kind of reset. As if that device had rebooted his mind, erasing everything he had learned."

Lyara frowned, not taking her eyes off the wounded man, who was still slowly recovering. They let a few minutes pass to assess his condition and, with some trepidation, Julius decided to try touching the device with the scalpel again. When he did, another small spark came from the device, and the man lost consciousness again. This time, when he woke up, he had not only forgotten the years he had lived in Elyndria, but also the last few minutes of interaction with Lyara and Julius.

—"This doesn't make sense..."— Julius muttered, looking at the wounded man with a serious face **—"It's as if by artificially activating the device, his recent memories are erased."-**

The man, increasingly bewildered, tried to stammer words to understand what was happening, but his confusion was palpable. Julius took Lyara by the arm and whispered:

—"We need to open his skull. If we want to understand what's going on, we need to know what's under that device."

Lyara shook her head slowly, a regretful expression on her face.

—"I have the tools to do it, but we lack the technology, Julius. If I try to open his skull without proper technology, he will almost certainly not survive."

A tense silence fell over the two of them as they stared at the man, who now seemed lost in his own mind. Finally, Julius sighed and nodded in resignation.

—"Okay, then let's do what we can to stabilize and heal him. But I need to keep him under my care. If this happens again, I want to be around to investigate it."

Lyara nodded her head in agreement, and together they sutured the wound as best they could. Julius, now more uneasy than ever about the implications of this discovery, decided to take on the responsibility of protecting and guiding the man, knowing

that his recovery, both physically and mentally, would be a battle in itself.

Following the discovery of the strange device in the soldier's skull, Julius and Lyara decided to share what had happened with Solomon. One night, while the camp was quiet and the fires were burning softly, they met in Solomon's tent to talk in private.

—"This can't be a coincidence," Julius said, crossing his arms as he recounted recent events. "That device... It doesn't belong to anything we've seen here. It looked like something out of advanced electronic technology."

Solomon sat on a makeshift bench, listening to him with a frown. When Julius finished, the man sighed deeply.

—"This confirms my suspicions," he said, looking at Lyara and then back at Julius. "There are too many things in this world that don't add up. The way we heal, how we fight, even the fact that we have memories of our previous lives but skills we never learned. All of this... fits with the theories we discussed before."

—"Do you think that device could be... a control, some kind of implant for us?"— Lyara asked, her voice filled with concern.

—"We know it can reset memory. It's also possible that it's a sensor... or a transmitter that feeds some device that contains the memory of each one of us," Solomon replied, gravely . "Although we still don't know for sure all of its functions . But this gives us a direction to search. We must investigate further."

Julius nodded slowly, and after a few moments of silence, Lyara spoke:

—"There is something that might be able to help us. I have a close relationship with Maria Magdalena, Logos' consort... I could try to get information from her."

Solomon raised an eyebrow, intrigued.

—"Maria Magdalena? The consort of Logos?"

—"Yes. She and I have talked several times, recently she told me about her fascination with technology. She told me in confidence that she

has access to some of Logos' computers. Apparently, she tends to meddle in them when he is busy in his secret meetings."

"What kind of meetings?" Julius asked, leaning forward.

—"He hasn't given me many details," Lyara replied, biting her lip in concern. "But he did mention something about meetings with beings he's never seen, which Logos refers to as A-Quon."

The silence that followed was thick. Solomon was the first to break it, his tone calculating.

—"If Maria Magdalena really does have access to Logos' computers, it could be our best chance to understand what's going on. But we must be cautious. If Logos finds out we're snooping, I have no doubt there will be serious consequences."

—"I know," Lyara said. "But I think I can earn her trust. She told me that she is fascinated by technology because in her time nothing like it existed. She even seemed excited to tell me

how she spends her time exploring the palace while Logos is busy."

Julius narrowed his eyes, considering the information.

—"This could work, but we need a plan. Lyara, do you think you could get some kind of concrete information out of him... does Logos' palace have some secret access?"

—"It's possible," she replied, nodding her head. "But I have to do it subtly. If he suspects something, he might close all the doors before we can accomplish anything useful."

—"Then do it carefully," Solomon said, resting a hand on his chin. "Meanwhile, Julius and I will try to find more clues around here at camp. We should see if that device is on all of us or just some of us."

The group agreed to keep in constant contact and work together on this new endeavor. As they left Solomon's tent, Lyara paused for a moment and looked at Julius.

—"This is dangerous, isn't it?"

—"Of course," he replied seriously. "But if we want answers, we have to take risks. We can't keep living in a world where everything seems like a lie."

Lyara nodded, her eyes shining with excitement. They headed to the tent to lie down while holding hands. They were determined to face whatever revelations they might encounter.

A week after the meeting with Solomon, Maria Magdalena told Lyara, with the enthusiasm of someone sharing a forbidden secret, some details about Logos' meetings with the A-Quon.

From what she could glean from him without being obvious, she told him that these meetings were meant to discuss ways to *'improve'* Elyndria, though her way of explaining it was clumsy and full of ambiguities. Maria Magdalena had lived during the dawn of civilization, and her vocabulary was neither refined nor adapted to describe modern technologies. In a very limited way, Maria described how Logos and these mysterious beings talked

about '*fixing flaws*' in the resurrected warriors, as well as their abilities and behaviors.

—"They say that some of the men... um... how do I explain it to you?"— Maria said, struggling to find the right words while gesturing with her hands— "They become... less useful over time. That their minds are no longer as fast, or their bodies not as strong. And the A-Quon tell Logos how to repair and improve them. As if they were... machines, do you understand?"-

Lyara listened attentively, her mind analyzing each word as she pretended to empathize with Maria Magdalena's enthusiasm.

—"Repair them?"— Lyara asked, leaning forward slightly —"How can they do that?"-

Maria frowned, trying to explain what she had seen.

—"I don't know exactly how. Logos talks about something he calls '*code tweaks*' or '*updates*'... something like that. Sounds weird, right? But he says it makes everything work better."

—"And what else do they mention?" Lyara insisted, trying not to seem too anxious.

Maria paused, lowering her voice as if she was afraid someone might hear her.

—"They've also talked about replacing the swords... or the simulations," she said, moving her hands as if she were brandishing an imaginary weapon. "They want the men to use more modern weapons instead. Pistols, rifles, lasers... things like that." She paused to ask Lyara. "Do you know what a pistol or a laser is?" She asked, intrigued.

Lyara tried to explain. -"A gun is something like a device that shoots a very short metal arrow, but it doesn't need a bow. A laser is a very powerful light that burns from a distance."- Lyara clarified.

Maria Magdalena continued -"Well... that. But I don't quite understand how they would do it. They talk with words I've never heard, things like '*ballistic systems*' and '*automated training*'. It's all very strange."-

Lyara nodded, trying hard to hide her astonishment. Maria spoke with a mixture of naivety and excitement, clearly fascinated by what little she could understand of the discussions she eavesdropped on.

—"And how do you manage to hear all that?"— Lyara asked, faking a knowing smile.

Maria laughed with a hint of mischief.

—"I sometimes hide near the rooms where they meet. I don't know if they know, but they don't seem to pay attention to me. I guess they think I don't understand anything, and the truth is... they're kind of right."— She confessed, shrugging her shoulders **—"But it entertains me. Besides, when Logos is gone, I have time to use his machines. I love to poke around. Those boxes with pictures on them are fascinating!"**- After some digging, the healer knew that she was referring to computers.

Lyara took advantage of that confession to deepen the conversation, trying to obtain as much information as possible without arousing suspicion. The image that Maria painted was disturbing: a world where the inhabitants were manipulated, adjusted

and controlled by higher forces, all under the supervision of Logos and mysterious allies called A-Quon.

As the days passed and after analyzing each new anomaly that was presented, Julius, Lyara and Solomon became increasingly convinced that Elyndria was not the paradise that Logos proclaimed, but an advanced simulation, designed for purposes that were still impossible for them to understand.

Maria Magdalena's words about adjustments to the resurrected and Logos' meetings with the enigmatic **A-Quon** had planted a seed of unease that could no longer be ignored. Julius replayed in his mind the strange wounds he had seen on the wounded soldier's skull and the metal device embedded in his bone. Solomon, for his part, could not stop thinking of recent events as evidence of a control system that manipulated not only their bodies, but their minds as well.

—**"If this is all a simulation,"** Solomon said one night as they argued around a campfire outside the camp. —**"Then we're being used as pieces of an experiment. Maybe they want to test so-**

something on us, something to do with our fighting ability or how we react under certain conditions."

Lyara, sitting cross-legged, nodded as she stared at the dancing flames.

—"It all fits together if you think about it," he added. "The soldiers here are too perfect, too efficient. And the wounds... the wounds heal in ways that make no sense, as if our bodies were designed to regenerate faster than normal. If this were real life, half of us would have died several times already."

Julius looked at both of them, his expression serious.

—"But for what purpose?"— He asked, crossing his arms— "If Elyndria is a simulation, what are they trying to achieve? Study our ability to fight? Recreate some kind of ideal army? None of this explains why they brought us here, why they gave us these false lives."-

Solomon sighed, as if the weight of his thoughts crushed him.

—"Those A-Quon that Maria Magdalena speaks of could be the keys to all of this," he suggested. "If Logos is working with them to fine-tune the resurrected and change the rules of the game, then we are not living in a natural world. This is a controlled environment, and we are their test subjects."

The silence that followed was heavy, filled with the certainty that what they said could be true. Each of them pondered the implications of their words. Elyndria, with all its vibrant colors and magnificent landscapes, now felt like a prison disguised as paradise. A prison where they were unwittingly playing the role of living experiments.

A woman with dark, curly hair and a headband is sitting on stone steps. She is wearing a light-colored, sleeveless dress with a dark sash and dark sandals with straps. The background is a textured, stone wall.

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4

María Magdalena

Solomon, Julius and Lyara made the decision to infiltrate the Temple of Solomon, the imposing fortress and home of Logos and his consort. They needed, somehow, to obtain conclusive evidence about the true nature of Elyndria. The suspicions that had accumulated with each revelation and the strange event of the reinitialization of an injured person no longer allowed them to sit idly by. They needed answers, even at the risk of their lives.

One afternoon, as Maria Magdalena walked towards the merchant stalls in the bustling camp-town of the human troops, Lyara intercepted her. Her expression was serious, with an air of urgency that did not go unnoticed by Maria.

—“Maria, please come with me,” Lyara told her, gently taking her arm.

—“What's wrong, Lyara?”— Maria asked, surprised, stopping looking at the products displayed in the market.

—"Some friends and I need to talk to you, it's important. Meet me at Julius's shop when you're done."

Maria frowned, but nodded. "Okay, I'll go. But I hope it's discreet; Logos doesn't tolerate secrets well, you know. I don't know if I have surveillance now."

- "You don't have to worry about that. My man has been following you since you left Solomon's Temple for over an hour. You don't have any surveillance on you." -

When Lyara arrived at Julius's tent with Maria Magdalena, Solomon could barely hide his astonishment. The woman's beauty left him speechless for a moment, something that did not go unnoticed by Maria Magdalena, who exchanged a discreet glance with him before beginning the conversation. The four of them were gathered under the dim light of the oil lamps.

—"Maria, thank you for coming," Julius began, pointing to an improvised seat next to the table. "We have something important to discuss with

you, something that requires your complete discretion."

Maria Magdalena sat down, folding her hands elegantly in her lap.

—"I'm here, what's this about?"— he asked, his tone laden with curiosity.

The three of them got straight to the point. They explained all the inconsistencies and doubts that had arisen. They even told her about the chip implanted in the soldiers. Maria Magdalena was visibly impressed by what they told her.

-"And this... why are you telling me this?"- He became interested.

Solomon stepped forward, still trying to control the shock of Maria's presence. **"It's about Logos,"** he said seriously. **"His behavior, his actions... and the questions that all of this raises."**

Maria raised an eyebrow, keeping her expression neutral. **"Questions? What do they mean?"**

It was Lyara who spoke then in a calm but meaningful tone. **"We know you are his consort,**

of course, but there are things that don't add up. Logos preaches humility, but lives surrounded by luxuries that contradict his words. Not only that... his isolation, his behavior towards women, his constant search for carnal pleasure, also raises doubts. His dependence on those A-Quon... and hundreds of questions that he has never managed to answer except with evasions."

Maria frowned slightly, as if Lyara's words had struck a chord. "I don't know what you're talking about. I... don't usually get involved in your personal decisions."

Solomon, who had been silent until then, decided to intervene. His voice was deep but not accusatory.

—"Maria, we are not here to judge you or to put you in danger. But you know better than anyone what happens in that temple. Logos does not really seem to be part of us, of humanity. Tell me... according to your experience... does he really consider you his equal?"

Maria's eyes drifted to the ground, and for a moment she seemed to lose her usual composure.

—"Logos is... complicated," he finally admitted. "I've always pretended not to notice his... distractions, the other women. His behavior in general... I thought it was my duty as his consort to stand firm, to be an unconditional support."

—"But you know very well that this Logos is not like the true Messiah that you knew, right?" Lyara said softly. —"You have been loyal, and he has not been loyal to you."

—"Maria, we need your help," Solomon said, as he fixed his eyes on hers.

Maria asked as her eyes met Solomon's. **"What are you asking of me?"** She asked in a tone that revealed both resignation and a spark of rebellion.

—"Help us find out what Logos is hiding," Julius said directly. "If he really is what he says he is, we have nothing to fear. But if there is something more behind all this, we have a right to know."

"We want to infiltrate the Fortress," Solomon intervened. His voice tried to soften the request, but he couldn't keep a hint of alarm out of it.

—"What?!"— Maria exclaimed, bringing a hand to her mouth— **"Do you know what you're saying? If Logos finds out, there will be no mercy."**-

—"It's a risk we need to take," Lyara replied with determination. **"But we can't do it without information, and you have access to the temple. We need you to help us find a safe path to get to the information we need."**

Maria Magdalena stood up, visibly nervous, and began to walk in circles inside the tent.

—"I... I don't know if I can do it. Logos trusts me, but if they find out I'm helping them... they'd kill me without remorse."

—"Maria, please," Solomon insisted. **"You already have access to privileged information. We don't believe the risk is fatal for you. You yourself have told Lyara that Logos gives you access to their computers. What else have you**

seen there? Every piece of information you give us is crucial."

Maria looked at them in silence for a few seconds, as if she were considering the magnitude of the decision she had to make. Much of what they said, she had already thought about. Although she was more worried about the mysterious A-Quon, of whom Logos was clearly terrified. Finally, she sighed and nodded.

—"Okay. I'll help you."— He said as his voice trembled slightly **—"But we must be careful. If something goes wrong... we'll all be doomed."—**

—"Thank you, Maria," Julius said sincerely. **"We will be extremely cautious."**

As she said goodbye, Maria Magdalena showed a change in her attitude. As she prepared to leave, she turned to Solomon and gave him a slight smile. Solomon, surprised, managed to respond with a nod and a slight smile.

The woman looked down, blushing slightly, before leaving the tent with Lyara. Solomon stared at her for a few seconds, his thoughts agitated, until Julius

patted him on the shoulder with a smile full of meaning.

That night they laid out the first outline of their plan. With the help of Maria Magdalena, who knew Logos' movements and the layout of the temple well, they had a chance to infiltrate and discover the truth hidden in the heart of Elyndria.

—**"I think he liked you,"** Julius commented, addressing Solomon, half joking.

Solomon snorted, trying to hide the impression that Maria Magdalena's beauty had made on him. **"Let's focus on the plan, shall we?"**

As they discussed the next step, the general of the human troops couldn't help but have the image of Maria remain in his mind.

A couple of months passed since the meeting.

The fortified palace of Logos stood imposingly on a hill, protected by the Praetorians, an elite group whose mission was to ensure the total defense of Logos and its fortress. Solomon and Julius watched from a distance, trying to analyze any weak points

in the strict security measures. However, they knew very little about the Praetorians, except what Maria Magdalena had told them during one of her nightly visits to Julius's tent.

—**"They are... strange,"** Maria Magdalena told them, frowning as she spoke. She had settled into a corner, with her characteristic serenity. But the uneasiness in her words was evident. **"They look like us humans, but something about them is not."**

—**"What do you mean?"**— Lyara asked, leaning forward in interest.

"They don't reason like us," Maria Magdalena explained, pausing as if searching for the right words. **"They only follow orders. They don't answer questions that aren't related to defense or attack. They don't have the ability to chat. It's like they're... machines."**

—**"Machines?"** Solomon intervened, listening attentively from his place by the fire. **"You mean they have robotic behaviors?"**

- "Robotic? What do you mean? What is that?" -
Maria asked, intrigued.

Solomon understood that Maria Magdalena had spent her entire life inside the fortress, almost completely isolated. Only now was she having more fluid contact with them. In Elyndria, through oral traditions, humanity had reached a level of general knowledge that spanned from about 4,000 years before Christ to about 3,200 AD, as far as they knew. And humans who came from archaic eras knew about technologies from the stories told in the camps: electricity, robots, computers, satellites, interplanetary travel, and technology in general.

But that was not the case for Maria Magdalena, who had been secluded almost since her resurrection inside the Logos Fortress. She had virtually no knowledge of any technology except that which existed in her original world, at the time of Christ. That is why the beautiful woman was fascinated when they talked about the advancements of the world after her death. And she certainly loved exploring the technology inside the Logos Fortress.

Solomon patiently explained to him what a robot was.

—**"Exactly,"** she replied, nodding as she took Solomon's hand almost instinctively. **"They have human form, like you or me, but when you try to talk to them, they show no emotions. If you ask them for something outside of their function, they simply ignore you. They remain vigilant, alert to any threat, but nothing more."**

Julius exchanged a glance with Solomon and then with Lyara.

"That would explain why they're always perfectly coordinated," Julius commented, rubbing his chin thoughtfully. **"They never make mistakes, they never rest..."**

—**"And they don't complain either,"** Lyara added, remembering the times she had passed by them while accompanying Maria Magdalena to the palace. **"They must not be humans, after all."**

Maria Magdalena sighed and looked at the group seriously.

—"As far as I know, they are invulnerable to most weapons," she continued. "Their armor is almost perfect, and their reflexes are too fast. Even though they look like men, I am convinced that there is something... different about them."

—"Perhaps they are hybrids," Solomon ventured, a spark of unease flashing in his eyes. "A human mentality, but one that has been stripped of everything that has nothing to do with the military. Something created to be perfect in combat."

The group fell silent, processing the information. To enter the palace and uncover the secrets Logos held, they would have to confront the Praetorians. The prospect was not only daunting, but posed a challenge none of them knew how to overcome.

Finally, Julius broke the silence.

—"If we're going to infiltrate, we need something to distract or disable them," he said, looking at Maria Magdalena expectantly. "You know the palace better, is there something we can use to our advantage?"

Maria Magdalena thought for a few moments before answering.

—"Logos is confident that they are unbeatable. There are no additional security systems for them... But if we manage to provoke a situation where their orders conflict, they could be temporarily paralyzed."

—"And how do we plan to do that?"— Lyara asked, crossing her arms.

—"That's what we have to find out: how orders are given to the Praetorians."— Solomon replied, with a light smile, although the seriousness never left his gaze.

The challenge of overcoming the Praetorians had become the next obstacle on their path to the truth. And although they did not have all the answers, none of them would stop until they had unmasked Logos and his secrets.

Maria Magdalena, with her usual reserved tone and a certain clumsiness in explaining the details, revealed to them the existence of a possible secret entrance to Logos' palace. According to what she had

observed in her years inside the enclosure, there was a room in one of the basements that had a door that allowed Logos to go outside.

—"I'm almost certain he uses it to secretly go out to the camp," said Maria Magdalena while moving her hands nervously. **"Maybe to look for... whores, or for things I don't understand. I've seen him leave some nights, and no one ever accompanies him when he returns."**

That door, according to Maria Magdalena, was supposed to lead to an exit near the northern edge of the camp. It was probably a disguised exit that Logos used for purposes she could only fathom.

"And how did you find that door?" Solomon asked, leaning forward with obvious interest.

—"One night I followed him," Maria Magdalena confessed, lowering her gaze as if remembering something embarrassing. **"I wanted to know what he was doing. I stopped before he saw me, but I watched as he touched something strange next to the door. The door opened and he disappeared into what looked like a tunnel. Later I got closer, and there was this device."** Accor-

ding to the description, the object appeared to be a password-activated keyboard.

"A keyboard!" Julius said, frowning. That seemed to interest him especially.

—**"Yes..."**— She answered, although she seemed to be unsure of the correct words —**"I don't know how to describe it properly. It's... like a board with little marks. Some of them shine. And he pressed them with his fingers."**-

Lyara and Julius nodded slowly, understanding what she was trying to explain.

—**"A password panel,"** Solomon finally said, looking at them all seriously. **"That's what it looks like."**

—**"Do you know what the password is?"** Lyara asked hopefully.

Maria Magdalena shook her head. **"I don't know. But..."** she added, looking at Julius. **"I can try to find out. Logos has a lot of computers in the private rooms. I've learned to use them a bit when he's not around. They're not like**

anything I've ever known in my time, but... they're fascinating. Maybe I can find something there."

—"Are you sure you can do this without being discovered?" Solomon asked, a hint of concern in his voice.

—"I've done it before. I think Logos knows I tend to poke at them... but he doesn't mind."— She replied, straightening up with some pride —"I don't think I'm an object of his concern. He's always busy in his meetings... with those beings he calls A-Quon. And I sometimes spend a few hours playing with some of them. They have fun games."-

—"If you find anything, inform us immediately," Lyara said, touching Maria Magdalena's arm gently. "This could be the only access that allows us to enter without having to face the Praetorians."

Maria Magdalena nodded firmly. "I will. But I will need time. If Logos suspects anything, it could be dangerous."

—"Take care, Maria," Solomon said, looking at her with genuine concern. **"We will trust you, but don't take too many risks."**

The plan now depended on Maria Magdalena being able to decipher the mystery of the tunnel and the password that opened it. Meanwhile, the others began to think of ways to support her and prepare for whatever they might find behind that secret entrance.

Back in the fortress, Maria Magdalena began to test her memory and intuition. On several occasions, taking advantage of moments when the fortress seemed to be plunged into silence, she approached the keyboard hidden in the secret tunnel. Cautiously, she entered a few words that she believed might be the key to access the passageway. They were words she remembered hearing Logos mention in his speeches or in private whispers: names of places, religious terms, and even phrases that sounded like an ancient lineage.

The first time, he slowly typed something that he thought made sense. The keyboard screen, emitting a dim glow, responded with a cold message:

****Access denied****. He pursed his lips in frustration, but didn't dare try another word right away. He clearly remembered Julius and Solomon's warnings: if he made a mistake several times in a row, an alarm could go off.

—"Be careful, Maria," Solomon had told her days ago, in a serious tone. **"That system could be more sophisticated than it seems. We can't risk being discovered."**

Following that advice, he decided to space out his attempts. Every time he returned to the keyboard, his heart pounded, fearing that any unusual keyboard sound or movement might attract the Praetorians.

Days passed between each attempt. She tried words she associated with Logos' teachings and her obsessions: "Messiah," "Elyndria," "Jerusalem." They all yielded the same message: ****Access denied****. Her frustration grew, but she did not let desperation overcome her.

One evening they met in Julius's tent. Maria Magdalena confessed to them the results of their efforts.

—"I haven't been successful," she admitted, lowering her voice so as not to be heard by anyone else. **"I've tried several words, but none of them work. I'm afraid the options I have in mind aren't the right ones."**

Lyara nodded, trying not to show the same concern she felt.

"That's what we feared," he said in a reassuring tone. **"We knew it was a possibility. The important thing is that you haven't taken too many risks."**

—"How many tries have you had?" Julius asked, leaning against the edge of a makeshift table as he watched her intently.

—"Three," Maria Magdalena replied. **"I made sure to wait several days between each one. I don't want any alarms to go off."**

—"You did well," Solomon said, crossing his arms and looking at her with some admiration. **"This shows that the system is more complex than we expected. Maybe it's not just a word, but something more elaborate."**

—"Anything else?"— She asked, frowning.

—"It might require a combination of words or even something biometric."— Julius explained the meaning of biometric so that he was clear. —
"Maybe a code and something linked to Logos itself, like its fingerprint or a facial scan."-

The group fell silent for a moment, considering the possibilities. Finally, Lyara approached Maria Magdalena and placed a hand on her shoulder.

—"You've done a good job so far. But we need to come up with an alternative plan. If we don't find the password this way, we need to find another way in."

Maria Magdalena nodded, grateful for the support. **"I'll keep trying,"** she said determinedly. **"If I manage to access any computer in Logos's quarters, I'll look for clues about that damn password."**

They agreed to remain calm and continue their investigations in parallel. Although Maria Magdalena's attempts had not borne fruit, each step they took brought them closer to discovering the secrets that

Logos hid behind that tunnel and its impenetrable fortress.

One night, after making love to Logos, Maria Magdalena watched him intently as he lay there manipulating an object she had never seen before. In the dim glow of the lamps that illuminated the bedroom, she saw that it was a small computer, unlike any she had used or explored inside the palace.

—**"What is that?"**— She asked, sitting up slightly and covering her breasts with a sheet.

Logos looked up, visibly tired but not surprised by her curiosity. He was aware that Maria's fascination with anything related to technology led her to ask constant questions.

—**"It's a computer, only it's a pocket model,"** he replied casually, turning the device over in his hands to show it to her.

Maria Magdalena came closer, her eyes shining with an almost childlike interest.

—**"Let me see it. How does it work?"**— he asked enthusiastically.

Logos looked at her for a moment, considering whether it was worth satisfying his curiosity. In the end, he sighed in resignation, convinced that there was nothing to fear. To him, Maria was just a woman fascinated by things she didn't fully understand, someone who, because of her origins in a primitive time, was in awe of any modern gadget.

—"Okay, but don't touch anything. Just the games. Understand?" He said firmly, handing her the small device.

Maria Magdalena took the computer carefully, examining it as if it were a newly discovered treasure.

—"It's so... small," he commented, sliding back into bed with the device in his hands. **"What can you do with something so small?"**

Logos leaned back against the cushions, a slight smirk on his face.

—"Everything you can do with the big ones. This one is even more advanced. I can access any system in Elyndria from here, check records, supervise troops..."— He paused, watching her as she explored the exterior design of the

device — **"But there's nothing there that you need to understand."** In a magnanimous gesture he said. **"I'll prepare a special model for you, equipped with games. Would you like that?"** -

"Of course, my lord. Thank you," Maria Magdalena replied enthusiastically as she thanked him with a kiss. **"Can I see how to use it?"** She asked in a pleading tone, looking at him with eyes full of genuine curiosity.

Logos chuckled, pleased by his apparent ignorance.

—"Okay, I'll show you. But pay attention, because I won't repeat it," he said as he leaned towards her and took the computer from her hands.

With quick, precise movements, he showed her how to turn it on, navigate the menus, and access basic functions. Maria watched him intently, recording every detail in her memory, although she pretended to be more interested in the design than in the functionality.

"It's impressive," he said, hiding his growing interest in the possibilities of what he had seen.

—"Of course it is," Logos replied, leaning back again. "It's one of the best tools I've ever designed. I'll prepare a special one for you tomorrow."

Maria Magdalena nodded, handing the device back with a well-rehearsed expression of admiration.

—"Thank you for showing me, my lord. It's amazing what you can do with it."

Logos took the computer and placed it on a small table next to the bed. Then, he lay back down, closing his eyes.

—"You worry about simpler things, Maria. Let technology be my burden."

She smiled weakly, her thoughts already far from the conversation. Although she knew she couldn't risk touching that device without him present, that night she began to formulate a plan. She had seen enough to understand that this small computer could be key to unlocking the secrets that both she and her new allies sought.

—"Now let me work, Maria. I have to send some messages to the A-Quon."— Logos put an end to the conversation that seemed unnecessary to him.

—"Of course, my lord."— Maria Magdalena smiled sweetly and settled into bed, pretending to prepare for sleep.

Logos turned the computer back on and began typing away, oblivious to the thoughts running through his consort's mind. Maria watched from the corner of her eye, careful not to appear too interested. Finally, when Logos's movements slowed and his breathing took on the calm rhythm of sleep, she opened her eyes. He was fast asleep, naked and peaceful beside her, as if he had no worries at all.

Maria Magdalena waited a few more minutes, making sure he wouldn't wake up, and then, her heart beating fast, she reached for the computer. Her fingers trembled as she took it, but once the device activated, her determination grew.

He navigated the system carefully, mimicking the movements Logos had taught him a few minutes earlier. He moved between files and folders, trying

to understand the strange names and complex functions that appeared on the screen. Then something caught his eye: a word written in Aramaic, his native language. Seeing it, he felt a chill run through his body.

—"Kēfā d-Nashūthā"— She whispered softly, as if by pronouncing it she would better remember its meaning. The phrase translated as "**rock of humanity**" something that filled her with unease. Why was that word, among so much incomprehensible text, written in Aramaic? It couldn't be a coincidence.

Maria pulled out a piece of parchment from her bedside table and carefully wrote down the words. Then, with the same care with which she had taken the computer, she put it back in its place, making sure there was no trace of tampering.

She lay back down beside Logos, who was still sleeping soundly. His face was relaxed and oblivious to the discovery the woman had just made. Maria closed her eyes, but her mind kept racing through the possibilities. The Aramaic word could be the key they were looking for, something that

would explain the true nature of Elyndria or, at the very least, open a new door to discovering the secrets of Logos and the A-Quon.

Maria Magdalena waited patiently for a few days, looking for the right moment to act. She knew that Logos' meetings with the mysterious A-Quon always lasted for several hours, and during those moments, he would immerse himself in deep discussions, far from any distractions. During those long periods, Maria took advantage of the opportunity to fulfill her goal: to discover more about the fortress and the secrets hidden in its depths.

Over the days, she had repeatedly urged Logos about her desire to explore the fortress, especially the areas the Praetorians kept off-limits. She told him she wanted to see more of the place, that she was curious about the parts she was never allowed to see. At first, Logos was reluctant, but her insistence, coupled with her apparent fascination with everything related to the castle's technology and surroundings, eventually exasperated him.

One day, while preparing for a new meeting with the A-Quon, Logos, annoyed by Maria Magdalena's

constant insistence, finally gave her the freedom she had been asking for.

—"Okay," Logos said, with a mix of tiredness and annoyance. He took the small handheld computer and opened an application. After a couple of movements, he said to her. —"**You are now free to move around the fortress. But don't forget that you are still my consort, and I don't want you to cause any trouble.**"

Maria Magdalena smiled inwardly, though she kept a calm expression on her face. She made a mental note of the new authorization and how Logos had activated it on her computer.

—"Thank you, my lord. I promise there will be no inconvenience."

As soon as Logos headed underground for his meeting with the A-Quon, Maria quietly stood up. She knew this was her moment, and she wouldn't waste it. As she left the room, one of the Praetorians, standing by the door, watched her with an impassive gaze.

—**"Where are you going, my lady?"** the guard asked in a monotonous tone.

Maria paused for a moment, smiling softly so as not to arouse suspicion.

"I'm going to walk around the fortress," he replied naturally. He knew there was no reason to doubt his word. The Praetorians didn't question much, they just did their duty.

The guard nodded without asking any more questions and allowed her to pass. Maria made her way, with a relaxed and firm step, towards the less-traveled corridors of the fortress. As she went, she carefully avoided the patrolling Praetorians and the fixed guards standing nearby. She knew that any suspicious movement could alert the guards, so she remained as discreet as possible.

Finally, she reached a more secluded area of the fortress. The silence of the third basement enveloped her, and the air was thick. In this forgotten sector of the fortress, the corridors were dark and cold, with stone walls that seemed to have been there since time immemorial. Maria Magdalena remembered the route Logos had taken when she saw

him arrive at the secret entrance, but she knew instinctively that there were other routes as well.

She pushed open an iron door that creaked slightly as it gave way, entering a narrower hallway. She knew that somewhere in that hallway a half-hidden side passage led to the secret entrance Logos had used. She was not intimidated, but rather eager to try out the new password.

He moved forward with caution, knowing that time was limited and that any miscalculation could lead to his movements being discovered. As he went deeper into the narrow corridors, the darkness began to envelop him more, creating a dense and almost oppressive atmosphere, but he did not stop.

Maria Magdalena had carefully noted down the Aramaic word she had found on the Logos pocket computer: “**Kēfā d-Nashūthā**”. She thought that might be the key to opening the secret door, and she didn’t want to miss the opportunity. At the end of the last hallway, there was the door.

She walked over to the panel and, with a deep sigh, typed the letters into the keyboard, remembering each stroke of the Aramaic word. Her finger paused

for a moment before pressing ' **enter** ' as Solomon had instructed, afraid that the attempt might fail. However, as she pressed the key, the door opened with a dull sound, as if a secret lock had given way. An immediate relief ran through her body.

She quickly covered herself with a veil that hid her face, afraid of being recognized. In Solomon's shop she had been told about devices called 'surveillance cameras' that could identify her if they were installed, and she was not willing to risk it. In addition, she had dressed in loose clothing that concealed her feminine figure, to prevent her identity as a woman from being exposed. She knew that in the depths of the castle, she must not attract attention under any circumstances.

She cautiously made her way through the tunnel. As she walked, the surroundings seemed to be devoid of cameras or any other surveillance devices, which made her feel slightly calmer, though no less alert. Each step she took echoed in her ears, and her heart pounded, setting the rhythm of her journey. She didn't know exactly what she would find at the end of the passage, but she wasn't going to stop.

She walked for what she thought was a couple of kilometres, the tunnel twisted and turned, and she had gone so far in that she finally came to a second door. Once again, with trembling hands, she entered the same password: '**Kēfā d-Nashūthā**'. The door, with a gentle gush of air, opened before her without resistance.

Behind the door, the appearance was not that of a hallway. It looked like a cave, dark and desolate. She moved forward, the echo of her footsteps reverberating off the stone walls. The cave bore no trace of recent activity. Maria Magdalena moved forward, feeling as if she were crossing an invisible line into the unknown. As she approached the light at the entrance, curiosity and fear mixed within her. Where would this cave lead?

Finally, he came to an entrance hidden in the undergrowth of what looked like a small hill. From the outside, it looked like he was in a natural cave. A little way off, he could see the camp. He had been right. The door allowed Logos to leave the fortress unseen.

She knew that time was limited. She memorized the landscape so she could guide her friends to the cave later, and decided to return to the castle quickly, covering her face once more with her veil and quickening her pace. She couldn't afford to be discovered, much less have her excursion through the tunnel noticed. The return passage was just as tense, and the echo of her footsteps seemed louder in the solitude of those tunnels.

Arriving at the secret door again, she entered the Kēfā d-Nashūthā code again, and the door opened and closed behind her, leaving her back inside the castle. She breathed a sigh of relief, although her mind was still full of questions. She knew she had taken an important step, but she also knew that the answers remained elusive.

A few days passed and Maria Magdalena met Lyara at the market. Although Logos' presence was always a constant in her life, he had not suspected anything at the time, so Maria Magdalena took the opportunity to tell him that she was going out to get some food with his permission. She knew he would not question her. The excuse was simple, but functional.

Whenever she could, during the night and when Logos was fast asleep, Maria Magdalena took advantage of the opportunity to take away his personal computer and learn about the applications inside it. She knew that Logos usually took the computer with him to his meetings and on his escapades through the tunnel. So she intuitively considered it an important target for her investigations.

She was right. One night she came across something unexpected. She stumbled upon a strange application that was hidden in one of the less accessible menus. Maria Magdalena, with her usual curiosity and Spartan discipline, began to explore it cautiously. The interface was clean, almost minimalist, but within those menus were hidden options that were clearly not for a common user. The application concealed a very complex layer of codes and configurations, and seemed to have the power to manipulate the internal operations of the fortress and the activities of the Praetorians. Intrigued, Maria Magdalena began to experiment with it.

One of the menus displayed a series of parameters that allowed her to modify the behavior of the Praetorian guards. At that moment, she understood

that she had found the option that Logos had used to give herself more permission to roam around the fortress. With a little intuition and some luck, she discovered that she could deactivate the reports that the Praetorians sent about her tours of the castle's rooms. These reports were what kept Logos informed of each of her movements within the fortress, since the Praetorians, always attentive and vigilant, never stopped monitoring the corridors and restricted areas.

At first, Maria Magdalena hesitated. She didn't know if she should reconfigure that function. It could put her in danger if Logos found out she had tampered with the menu, and although she knew that her relationship with him was not based on mutual trust, she had never sought out a direct confrontation. But the idea of having freedom to move without restrictions, of being able to explore the castle and the hidden areas without the constant fear of being observed, was tempting. And what's more, it could bring her closer to what she really sought: answers.

Finally, he decided to take a chance. He activated the option that disabled the Praetorians' reports on

his movements in restricted areas. But he left the reports on common areas of normal transit. He put the computer away with the same caution with which he had taken it. He looked around to make sure no Praetorian had seen it, then returned it to the place where Logos kept it. Everything seemed in order, and the excitement in his chest grew, for he had gained something that, until that moment, seemed impossible: freedom within the fortress.

From that day on, Maria Magdalena began to move about with a renewed confidence. She no longer had to wait for Logos to give her permission or leave before she could explore. She walked through the corridors, up and down the stairs, and entered restricted areas without fear of being stopped or questioned. The presence of the Praetorians no longer bothered her, for she knew that they could not report her movements.

What surprised her most was that, despite the freedom she had gained, she felt more trapped than ever in a web of lies. Although she could now move around the fortress without restrictions, her conscience kept hammering at her with the same ques-

tion: How far was she willing to go to discover the truth they were so seeking?

A few days later, she met the others at Solomon's tent, as planned. There was an atmosphere of confidentiality that made her feel safe. Lyara, Julius, and Solomon were waiting for her, sitting around a wooden table, as if they knew this could be crucial.

Maria Magdalena, after a brief greeting, began to speak in a low voice.

"I have accessed the secret entrance," he said, looking at the three of them carefully. He didn't want anything to be taken lightly.

Solomon raised an eyebrow, intrigued.

—**"How?"**— Julius asked, with some disbelief.

Maria Magdalena took a deep breath before explaining. She detailed the password she had found, **Kēfā d-Nashūthā**, and how she had managed to gain access to the tunnel. She also told them about the cave that hid the secret door and how she had managed to return unnoticed.

—"I know it sounds risky, but there were no other options," Maria Magdalena added, looking at the three of them.

He told them about the work he had to do to obtain the password, his little adventure in the secret passage, and his findings about the handheld computer, which Lyara, Julius, and Solomon identified as a tablet. After some discussion, they agreed to meet again. Solomon and Maria Magdalena were left alone.

Solomon approached her and, in a soft tone, commented:

—"You are admirable. You have done what many would not dare to do. You are brave."

Maria Magdalena, somewhat surprised by the sincerity of his words, said nothing at first. She stood silently with rosy cheeks, observing the man's face for a moment. Finally, she spoke softly, with a slight smile.

—"I'm not brave, I just have reasons to fight."-

Solomon stared at her, as if he wanted to read her thoughts, and then, without another word, he took her by the hand and pulled her towards him, embracing her tenderly. Maria Magdalena responded to his gesture, and before they knew it, they were both locked in an intense kiss, as if the whole world had vanished around them.

The passion between them grew quickly, as if everything they had experienced had led up to that moment. Love, the need to feel something real in the midst of so much uncertainty, brought them together in an unexpected way. They made love fleetingly and intensely, like an escape from the reality that surrounded them.

After a while, they parted. Maria Magdalena quickly got ready.

—"I must go before Logos misses me too much," he said, adjusting his cloak.

Solomon nodded, understanding the situation. **"I know. Be careful. And if you need anything, you know where I am."**

With one last look filled with mixed feelings, Maria Magdalena said goodbye and left the shop, walking quickly through the market streets, aware that everything she had done had brought her one step closer to discovering the truth, but also closer to losing herself in the process.



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5 The Underground Complex

The group gathered in Solomon's tent amidst a tense atmosphere, aware that what they were planning was as risky as it was necessary. Julius, Lyara, Maria Magdalena and Solomon discussed every detail with precision, making sure that no loose ends were left. They knew that any mistake could give away their mission prematurely, or worse, cost them their lives.

The main idea came from Solomon, who, with his years of military experience, proposed a bold strategy. After a long deliberation, everyone agreed that Solomon would allow himself to be injured by Julius during training. It should be just enough to simulate a credible accident but not enough to endanger his life.

Once wounded, he would be taken to Lyara's hospital tent for medical care and there he would be isolated in solitary confinement. From Lyara's hospital tent, he would disappear for a few days in a discreet manner and without arousing suspicion. This would allow Julius to temporarily assume

command of the camp while Solomon infiltrated Logos Fortress.

- "Are you sure you want to do this, Solomon?"
Julius asked, looking his friend in the eyes.

- "I'm the one with the most experience with computers. If I can infiltrate Logos' system, I'm the one with the best chance of success. Julius, you were electronic. Lyara was a doctor. And Maria Magdalena, in your time, there were no computers."- Solomon answered with a firm and convinced voice. **- "Logos will be more concerned with controlling the situation in the camp than with guarding its internal doors. I trust you to maintain order while I carry out this mission."-**

Lyara, who had been listening in silence, intervened with some concern. **"I'll have to justify your absence to anyone who asks. Are you sure no one will suspect when you disappear?"**

- "If we do this right, no one will," Solomon said. **"Besides, Logos will never imagine that anyone would dare to enter his fortress uninvited. That's our only advantage."**

Maria Magdalena, sitting next to Lyara, looked thoughtful. **"I can tell Logos that you are seriously injured and need complete rest. I'll tell him that I found out during one of my visits to the market,"** she suggested. **"That should keep him calm while you're gone. Maybe he'll contact Julius to find out firsthand, but I don't think anything serious will happen."**

"Perfect, dear. Thank you," Solomon said, nodding. **"And Julius... make sure the wound is convincing. I don't want anyone to think this was just staged."**

Julius seemed uncomfortable with the task, but nodded. **"That will be it, my general. I will do it carefully. If something goes wrong, I could not forgive myself."**

"I trust you," Solomon replied, placing a hand on his shoulder. **"This is for something bigger than us."**

The group spent the next few hours fine-tuning the details. Lyara would be in charge of personally overseeing Solomon's "recovery" in her hospital

tent, making sure no one else entered or left without her permission.

Maria Magdalena would have the most dangerous task. She would use her position inside the fortress to hide the infiltrator, bring him food if his stay was prolonged, and above all, she would have to bring him a computer so he could infiltrate the system. That last part was the most dangerous. If she was discovered, she was sure it would cost her life immediately.

They all agreed to try to divert any attention that might be directed toward the plan.

Julius would assume leadership, using his charisma and authority to maintain order among the troops.

-"This has to go perfectly," Solomon murmured at the end of the meeting, looking at each of them.

-"If we don't do it now, we might not get another chance. At any moment they can change the password to the access door."

When they finally said their goodbyes, the group knew there would be no turning back. Everything was ready to start the next morning, and although

the nerves were palpable, each of them was determined to play their part.

Maria Magdalena took advantage of that same night, waiting patiently for Logos to sleep soundly, to use the small tablet. She opened the hidden application that allowed the praetorians to be configured and selected a couple of rooms inside the basement of the fortress as restricted areas for them.

In those rooms she would hide Solomon. She carefully adjusted the settings so that the guards would avoid patrolling there, and she turned off activity reports in those sectors. When she was done, she checked several times to make sure the settings were saved correctly. Satisfied, she returned the tablet to its usual place next to Logos before he woke up.

Meanwhile, Solomon, the next morning, relying on the information provided by Maria Magdalena and his own experience as a programmer, prepared to infiltrate the fortress. Before dawn, he prepared a backpack, a short sword, a blanket and some supplies and took them to Lyara's tent for her to hide.

Then, with the three suns rising, he went to camp. At one point during training, he paired up with Julius to give his friend a demonstration. When Julius attacked, he stepped back and pretended to slip, which served as an excuse for Julius to injure him on the left forearm.

He bled profusely. He temporarily left Julius in charge and went to Lyara's tent, where Lyara stitched up his wound and sent him to an isolated room. The doctor placed a trusted guard at the entrance to Solomon's tent and gave orders not to enter and prevent anyone from entering, under penalty of death.

With absolute stealth, Solomon took the backpack. He looked for a secret opening that Lyara had indicated to him, and went out to another tent. He wrapped his face and walked through the streets of the camp without attracting attention. He walked for about half an hour until he reached the hill that Maria Magdalena had shown him. Carefully, among the branches of the bushes, he located the entrance to the cave. He took the short sword from the backpack he was carrying and, ready to repel any attack, he advanced into the stone cave.

He walked several meters until he reached the access door. He entered the password code and a whistle indicated that the door had opened. He went through the door, closed it carefully and could see the secret passage that Maria had gone through. The tunnel, half dark and silent, was narrow, but Solomon advanced with determination, feeling the humidity on the stone walls and the echo of his own steps. The lighting did not come from a visible light source, but he guessed some LED strips hidden between the stones that provided the weak light that allowed him to guide himself inside.

Finally, upon passing through the second door, he found Maria Magdalena waiting for him in one of the protected chambers. The woman, while indicating silence with her index finger crossed over her lips, pounced on him, relieved, and gave him a long kiss. She quickly led him through the interior of the fortress, making sure that no Praetorians were around. **"You'll be safe here for now,"** she whispered as they entered a room and carefully closed the door behind them. **"You cannot enter or search this area. I've set everything up so that you ignore it."**

- "Good job," Solomon replied, surveying the small room carefully. **- "I expected nothing less from you. This is perfect for keeping me hidden."**

Maria Magdalena smiled at him, pleased. She pointed to a corner where there was a computer. **"I brought you the computer that Logos gave me for my personal use... but I don't know if it has anything of value. In a few hours I have to take it with me so that he doesn't notice its absence and get suspicious."** She told him her plan. **"Start with that one for now, but I'm going to bring you a computer that he usually uses for work but it's not one of his favorites. He uses it very sporadically. I just have to wait for the right moment to take it out of the room and bring it to you."**

As he said goodbye, he said, **"I must go back. On that table you have some food and water. I will try to come back every day. At night it won't be possible because Logos can notice that I'm not by his side, but during the day, it will be easier."**

In the days that followed, Solomon remained hidden in the room. Maria Magdalena crept up to him each day, bringing him bread, fruit, and some meat wrapped in cloth so that he would not leave a trace. During their fleeting encounters, they quietly discussed the next steps of the mission and shared brief moments of love that helped keep their spirits high.

-"Has Logos noticed anything?"- Solomon asked him on one of those nights.

-"No, he's too busy with his meetings with the A-Quon to pay much attention to me," Maria Magdalena replied, trying to hide her growing tiredness. **-"But we can't risk it much longer. You have to find what you came for soon."**

-"I will," Solomon assured, grateful for his help. **-"I just need a couple more days to analyze the system from here. Then we can take the next step."**

They both knew they were walking a tightrope, but they were confident that their efforts would pay off. Each night, Maria Magdalena lay in the bed she shared with Logos with her heart racing, knowing that Solomon was working secretly from his hiding pla-

ce, aware that the success of their mission depended on every little detail they managed to control together.

Maria Magdalena waited patiently for Logos to meet with the A-Quon, an event that always kept him busy for hours. She took advantage of that moment to take one of the laptops that he had on one of his personal desks and carefully carried it to the hidden room where Solomon was hiding.

-"This might be of more use to you," he said quietly as he handed her the device. **-"It's one of Logos' computers. He barely uses it, and I don't think he'll notice it's missing for a few hours."**

Solomon nodded with a serious nod. He handed Maria Magdalena her gaming computer back, and proceeded to turn on the new equipment. For the first few hours, he worked in silence, exploring the files stored on the system. The device was protected by layers of security, but with his experience and patience, Solomon managed to navigate the obstacles. What he found shocked him.

-"This building is not just a fortress," he muttered, pointing at the screen. **-"It's a huge complex. Look at this."**

Maria Magdalena leaned over his shoulder, watching as Solomon displayed a complete map of the fortress on the monitor. Her eyes widened in amazement at the vast network of tunnels and chambers that stretched out beneath the main structure.

"What's that?" she asked, pointing to a particularly dense section of the map.

-"It looks like... an underground industrial complex... or something like that." Solomon replied, zooming in on the image to detail the machinery and areas labeled with technical names he didn't quite understand. **-"This explains a lot. Logos not only rules this place as a temple, he also uses it to manufacture something... but I don't know what yet."**

Maria Magdalena looked at him worriedly. **-"Can you extract this information? We cannot risk relying only on what we see. Our memory will**

not be enough to remember this entire structure."-

Solomon smiled slightly proud of Maria's intelligence and searched through the applications on the device. **"It's more sophisticated than your computer. It has an output system... that is, a printing or output system."** He explained as he took out a small holographic plate from one of the computer's compartments. **"We can record all of this here. It will be a three-dimensional map that we can project when we need it."** According to Solomon's thoughts, those computers were several centuries advanced compared to the date of his death.

With deft hands, Solomon activated the 3D recording process and the system began transferring the data. The computer hummed softly as the holographic plate captured the information through an interface that he could not determine if it was through electromagnetic waves or something else.

It was not a physical interface, in fact. A few minutes later, the process was complete, and Solomon held the plate in his hand, examining it in the dim

light of the room. He pressed a button and the map emerged, projected in all its splendor. Its initial size was about thirty by thirty centimeters, but it could be enlarged or reduced with careful movements.

The holographic image had a menu, which allowed one to jump between the recorded map or stored information files.

-"This is amazing," Maria Magdalena said with a barely audible squeal of excitement. She was watching as the three-dimensional map briefly unfolded in the air as she activated it. **-"This could be just what we need to take on Logos."**

-"No doubt," Solomon replied as he turned off the computer and returned the badge to a secure compartment in his clothing. **-"But it also puts us in danger. If Logos suspects we have this, it could all be over before we can use it."**

Maria Magdalena nodded gravely, understanding the risk they were taking. With great care, she picked up the computer and prepared to return it to Logos' desk before their meeting ended. **"We'll have to act quickly,"** she said before leaving the

room. "If we're going to use this information, we can't wait too long."

—"You must return it to its place as soon as possible," he said in a low voice. "I will try to reach this industrial complex. If you don't hear from me in the next few days, find Julius and Lyara and tell them everything we have discovered."

Maria Magdalena looked at him with concern. "Let me go with you," she pleaded. "If anything happens, you will need help."

Solomon shook his head firmly. "We can't, my dear. We don't know what's down there or how long it will take. It will be safer for you to stay here and continue to play your part. If we both disappear, Logos will notice immediately, and all our work will have been in vain."

Maria Magdalena sighed, understanding the logic behind his words even if she didn't like it. With one last exchange of glances, they said goodbye. She slipped out of the room, taking a hidden path to return the computer to Logos' desk without being seen.

Meanwhile, Solomon wasted no time. He loaded water and food into his backpack. He fastened his belt and checked the small holographic plate he carried with him, making sure he had access to the three-dimensional map. He left the room that had made him feel protected, and with cautious steps, he began to descend through the lower levels of the temple, avoiding praetorians and patrols with the same precision he had shown upon entering.

As he descended the air grew heavier, and the artificial lighting from the torches and lamps grew dim and flickering. Why torches and lamps here? He wondered. Logos Fortress was, as far as he knew, the only place on the planet where there was electricity. Torches were all they had on the rest of the planet, but... here? That was another mystery.

After a long journey through winding corridors and rusty metal stairs that led him to the seventh basement, he reached a room with an entrance sealed by a huge steel door. He consulted the map projected by the holographic plate and confirmed that he was in the right place.

With effort, he pushed open a side panel that activated an unlocking system. An electric motor seemed to activate and the door slowly swung open with a mechanical screech, revealing a vast industrial complex hidden beneath the surface of Elyndria. Solomon gasped at what he saw.

Huge machines hummed rhythmically, creating a constant sound that vibrated through the air. Pipes and ducts extended in every direction, connecting multiple levels of platforms and workstations. Industrial robots and drones moved with precision, operating machinery that seemed designed for mass production. In the distance, flashes of blue and orange light illuminated entire sections of the complex.

Solomon took a cautious step inside, observing every detail carefully. He knew that what he was seeing was not only important, but potentially devastating if Logos used it for some sinister purpose. Determined, he went deeper, searching for any clue that might explain the true function of the place.

He knew he couldn't stay long, but he also understood that this might be his only chance to discover the truth.

As Solomon made his way deeper into the vast complex, his footsteps echoed in the metal corridors, almost drowned out by the constant hum of the machines. As he moved forward, he observed robots that looked eerily like Praetorians, working tirelessly and completely ignoring him. Their movements were precise and synchronized, as if obeying a single central command. They carried metal parts, assembled components, and monitored large conveyor belts that seemed to never stop.

The underground building stretched downward into a seemingly endless abyss. Solomon consulted his holographic plate, which confirmed that there were more than a hundred levels below the surface. He could only imagine the scope of the operation taking place there.

He reached an elevator that took him to one of the lower levels of the complex. There was a large runway lit by bright lights that flashed white and red. Parked in a row were dozens of large aircraft that

caught his eye. They looked like helicopters, but with a much more futuristic design. Each had a frame equipped with huge mechanical claws and articulated legs, clearly designed to pick up cargo from the ground without having to land.

Solomon approached cautiously, observing the details of these machines. The claws were robust and showed signs of wear, as if they had been used frequently. Something suddenly activated. Frightened, he hid in a corner so as not to be seen. Large hatches in the ceiling opened. They reminded him of the immense hatches that protected the nuclear missiles he had seen in his life on Earth. Several helicopters began to arrive at the runway. As they gradually descended, he could distinguish that their claws were carrying bodies of soldiers. Humans and aliens.

Once landed, several robots carried the bodies of the deceased to conveyor belts, which carried their load to a distant tunnel, several hundred meters away.

Solomon soon came to a disturbing conclusion: these aircraft were used to collect the bodies of

those killed in combat during the "Sleep of Death." Logos, the A-Quon, or someone else did not want the inhabitants of Elyndria to see the helicopters rescue the dead bodies.

A chilling thought crossed his mind. He remembered what Lyara and Julius had told him about the chips implanted in soldiers and the effects they produced. Surely these chips received a signal that caused the living to fade away during these body recovery operations. He shuddered as he imagined himself and other soldiers lying motionless and vulnerable as these machines descended from the sky to carry off their fallen comrades.

All indications were that the purpose of this industrial complex was not only to maintain Logos' war machine, but also to hide the horrific realities of its operations. Solomon knew he needed to find more evidence, but the risk of being discovered was growing. Still, with his heart racing and his mind full of questions, he decided to continue exploring, knowing that what he discovered could change the course of his fight.

In the industrial complex he saw structures and computerized systems that allowed for the artificial manufacture of new resurrections.

The resurrected were not metal robots, but living bodies created by some cloning system, from which the brain was removed and replaced by an artificial brain controlled by the chip. As he saw it, all those who inhabited Elyndria were mixed organisms: bodies of flesh and blood, an artificial brain and a personal identity copied surely from the Archive of Souls or some similar system. He thought that probably the chip could not only emit signals and transmit them, but that it housed the personality of the individual, his conscience.

As Solomon continued to explore the industrial complex, he came to a section where the environment seemed more sterile and technologically advanced than the other areas. There, through reinforced glass, he saw the bodies of dead soldiers being carried away and placed on an assembly line that began with the removal of the chips implanted in their artificial brains.

The machines worked with chilling precision: Robotic arms removed used chips and deposited them in a compartment where they were discarded or recycled. A new chip, shiny and clean, was implanted in the place of the old one. The “reset” bodies seemed to reboot, their eyes briefly opening before they were led to another conveyor belt that prepared them to return to the battlefield or their designated duties. The process was cold, efficient and devoid of any trace of humanity.

In the same area, Solomon discovered an imposing machine. He recognized it as a modern microprocessor factory that seemed to be the heart of the production of the personality chips. It was immense, with several mechanical arms assembling thousands of chips per minute. Motherboards were created in a matter of seconds, each one engraved with a complex data structure that surely contained the codes necessary for absolute control of consciousnesses. The chips looked exactly like the ones Lyara had found on the body of the reset soldier and that Julius had also seen on another occasion.

He paused for a few minutes to observe the details, his mind processing the implications of what he

saw. The chips were the core of the technology that controlled the inhabitants of Elyndria. This industrial complex received the improvements by wireless transmission, stored them in each soldier's personality in the Archive of Souls, and when the soldier died, his personality, enhanced by experience, was transferred to a new body. An endless system of individualized war improvement.

The entire damn planet seemed designed to function as one gigantic hive under the command of a central intelligence.

As he moved forward, Solomon began to consider a disturbing possibility: what if Elyndria itself was not an organic planet, but an artificial construct? The perfect geometric patterns, the integration of natural and technological structures, and the scale of the industrial complex suggested that a superior race must be behind it all. The A-Quon, of whom so much was spoken but no one had ever seen directly, seemed to be responsible. If they were the architects of this world, then Logos was merely an intermediary, a figurehead who executed their plans.

As he pondered these questions, Solomon found something that confirmed his worst suspicions. In a vast, isolated room guarded by Praetorians patrolling in predictable patterns, he discovered what appeared to be the core of the system: a massive central computer, with a series of holographic screens projecting data in real time. Among the projections, he could make out thousands of faces flashing across the screens. This was probably the core of the "Archive of Souls."

The core of the system not only stored the memories of human consciousnesses, but also processed enhancements, altered unwanted behavior patterns, and transferred the enhanced consciousness to chips implanted in brains. It was the heart of Elyndria, the source of identity for the inhabitants and the tool that kept them under control. Solomon realized that any hope of reincarnation any soldier on the planet had depended on maintaining that central computer.

The magnitude of what he had discovered overwhelmed him. Elyndria was neither a world of the living nor the dead, but a system controlled by higher entities, designed to perpetuate a twisted

form of existence. Aware that every second in the complex increased the risk of discovery, Solomon prepared to return with this crucial information, even though he knew that exposing this truth would set in motion a chain of unpredictable events.

He thought of Earth. Of his family. Of all those who had lived on that planet that seemed far away and that perhaps belonged to a different universe in this tangle of lies. All he remembered that was part of the human race were probably the Memories of a Dead World.



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6 Technological Advancement

Solomon made his way back to the fortress, looking for the tunnel that would allow him to get outside and reach the human camp. Among the many technical offices he could see, there were plenty of computers he could take with him. He was sure they wouldn't be missed. But the problem was the lack of electricity. If he stole a computer, how could they get it working?

As he made his way back to the entrance of the industrial complex, he saw that there were countless workshops spread across the levels, each one filled with strange machines and tools. In one of them, his eyes fell upon a large machine that reminded him of a centrifuge, but what really sparked a flash of lucidity in his mind was the memory that it could be equipped with an electric motor. Solomon, with his past experience on Earth, had a solid foundation in technology. And he had a sudden idea: if he could extract the winding from that motor, Julius could surely improvise an electric generator.

Julius was the group's electronics expert, and according to Solomon, he could build a generator using

the removed engine and some makeshift structure. He envisioned a bicycle attached to it, which when pedaled would generate the electricity needed to power the computer. It was a rudimentary solution, but in Elyndria, where resources were limited and electricity was nonexistent, it was the only viable option.

With this in mind, Solomon took a few minutes to dismantle the centrifuge motor. It was not easy; the place was guarded by Praetorians patrolling the nearby areas, and every noise he made while manipulating the machine seemed like a deafening roar. After several minutes of tension and hurried work, he managed to extract the coil and escape the place with his precious loot. He put the motor in his backpack and began to look for an office with a computer available.

He found a room tucked away in a corner of the complex, which had three computers. It looked like an ordinary office, lost in the sea of rooms in the complex. He decided that it met the conditions where the computer's loss would not be obvious. He chose one of the sturdy-looking computers, clearly designed to withstand demanding condi-

tions. The device was quite heavy, and Solomon had to use quite a bit of strength to carry it into his backpack.

In total, he estimated that he was carrying between thirty and forty kilos on his back. He tried to be as stealthy as possible, since what he was most concerned about was being able to spread the news of what he had discovered during his incursion into the Logos Fortress.

He returned from his raid exhausted, but satisfied because he had not come empty-handed.

He immediately met up with Lyara and Julius, and informed them of everything he had discovered in the system files, especially about the underground industrial complex. His companions were amazed by the three-dimensional hologram, which they studied in detail.

Julius was the first to inspect the electric motor. **“This has potential,”** he said excitedly, as he began mentally drawing up schematics for turning it into a generator. Solomon explained his plan, and although it seemed far-fetched, everyone agreed that it was worth a try.

Before assembling the generator and the stolen computer, they improvised a basement inside Solomon's tent by digging a deep hole, which they covered with planks and spread dirt on top of it to create an improvised floor. Hidden on one side, they left a door with a small staircase that allowed them to descend with relative ease to the basement. There they assembled the electric generator and connected the computer.

Julius said as he checked the generator and adjusted some connections. **"Well, Solomon, I have to admit that this is pretty impressive. How did you even think of taking apart a centrifuge to get the motor out? Do you know how many times I've wished for electricity in here?"**

Solomon smiled tiredly, his hands covered in grease from the makeshift bike. **"Not that I've had much time to think. I saw the engine, remembered you were always looking for ways to generate power, and thought, 'Well, if there's no electricity, we'll have to make it. ' It was that or leave the computer there."**

Lyara crossed her arms, as she expressed with a gesture of admiration - **"And you risked it all by yourself, right? As if breaking into the Logos industrial complex wasn't dangerous enough. Do you know what would have happened if you were caught?"**

Solomon shrugged. **"I know, Lyara. We wouldn't be talking. But, if we wanted any real chance against Logos and the A-Quon, we needed more than just ideas and words. This computer may contain crucial information about how Elyndria works. If I didn't try, we'd be stuck."**

Julius gave a short laugh, at the satisfaction that this small victory gave him. **- "Well, considering what you brought, I'd say it was worth it. This engine I think has enough capacity to run more than one computer, even some lighting if we set it up right... Although I don't know where the hell I can get a light bulb, or an LED... It's a shame we don't have a battery, but this is a great start."**-

Lyara used a softer tone as she said , **"I understand it was necessary, Solomon, but you**

have to be more careful, my friend. We can't afford to lose you. You're the one guiding us through all of this."

Solomon nodded and looked up briefly, smiling. "I didn't do it alone, Lyara. Without Maria Magdalena's help I wouldn't have made it. The rest was a bit of care and some luck to get out alive. Now, Julius, tell me this generator is working and we won't have to pedal until dawn to see it turn on."

Julius laughed heartily as he connected the last cables. "It's done. Someone will have to pedal for hours while someone else uses the computer. Who's willing to volunteer?"

Lyara rolled her eyes while laughing and said, "Please, Julius. You know I won't be the one pedaling. But now, just make it work. I'll make it up to you tonight."

Julius stood on the makeshift bicycle and began to pedal hard. "Okay, okay. Let's see if this thing turns on."

After a few seconds of effort, the computer lights flickered on and the system began to boot. A low hum filled the basement as the screen lit up.

Solomon sighed in relief as he walked over to the computer. **"There it is. We did it."** If only Maria Magdalena could see it.

Lyara stared at the screen in fascination. **"I can't believe this actually works. What's next, Solomon?"**

Solomon looked at his friends with a look of mild confusion. **"First, let's see what's inside. If this computer has a link to the Logos system, I think we can find out a lot more about this world. This... this could be our first step towards freedom."**

Julius rubbed his hands together excitedly. **"Well, while you figure that out, I'm going to work on optimizing this generator. I don't want to pedal every time we need electricity."** He thought for a moment. **"I'm thinking of building a battery like the old Baghdad batteries, the ones that were on display at the Baghdad Museum in Iraq. Do you remember that, Lyara?"**

Lyara placed a hand on her forehead, as if remembering something vital - **"True! How could I not remember? We have bowls, citrus fruits at the market... and at the blacksmith's you can ask to have electrodes made for you."** -

Solomon laughed as he said, **"The time has come to technify the world of Elyndria..."**

As Julius pedaled as if for a competition, the group watched the screen light up in wonder and hope. Solomon knew that the data contained within this machine could be the key to understanding how Elyndria worked and finding a way to free its inhabitants. The generator was not just a source of power; it was a symbol of resilience and the will to survive in a world designed to control them.

It was night in the palace. Maria Magdalena was in the bed she shared with the former Jesus of Earth. Completely naked, face up, she endured the hard blows of a crazed Logos who made love to her without any consideration, care or feeling. Every so often the woman let out a fake moan that simulated pleasure, dug her nails into the man's back and even

licked the bare skin of his neck while her legs surrounded him. She felt nothing. Except disgust.

She used her experience as a prostitute in the distant days of Earth. **"How many years have passed since I lived with Jesus on Earth?"** she thought, while Logos entered and left her body at a feverish pace.

She had been his consort for over thirty-five years. He had chosen her the instant after his resurrection. And he hadn't given her a chance. He had told her that she would be his consort or die by his sword. He had even slid the blade of his weapon across her neck. Stunned by the resurrection and confused, she had had no choice but to accept. A scar could still be seen on her neck, reminding her that her life was worthless. She knew now that he had chosen her because of her lineage and the past they had shared.

She knew Logos very well from her time in this world. And he had little in common with the man she had met on Earth. The Logos of Elyndria was not the same as the one on Earth. He was a deeply human person. And she had fallen completely in

love with him. Maria Magdalena had also known his mother, Maria, the one who had deceived the carpenter. The whole town knew about it, but no one ever wanted to say anything so as not to hurt Joseph. Finally, Jesus' parents decided to leave the town where they had lived all their lives. But, although the circumstances of their life had not been the best, Jesus had become a wonderful being. Because of him, she left her life as a prostitute to follow him.

But the Logos that now ruled Elyndria held her like an animal. And there was nothing sweet, touching or human about him. To Maria Magdalena, the Messiah of this planet was a monster. Not only had he turned her into a luxurious sexual prisoner, but he kept her isolated from the world. Only Lyara had dared to befriend him. And she was eternally grateful for that.

Lyara came from the same bloodline as Jesus' mother. Bloodlines weren't defined in those days, and from what she knew, Lyara was a close cousin of Logos. In her years of sharing a bed with a madman, Maria Magdalena had learned some secrets of the insane lord who forced her to be his consort.

Logos lusted after his cousin, but she was the only woman in Elyndria who had openly rejected him and was still alive. Logos had confessed to Maria Magdalena that he couldn't kill Lyara. There was something in his mind that prevented him from harming her in any way even if that was his wish.

The man's deranged mind was haunted by demons that tormented him. The last time he tried to sleep with his cousin, he was rejected again. Then Logos had caused Horatio's death. He had used his computer to immobilize him during a battle. And his current rival had killed him.

When Lyara had first approached her in the marketplace to offer her friendship, he had seen what a beautiful, brilliant, and kind person she was. And he knew that she was offering her friendship in defiance of the leader of the humans in front of everyone. Since her resurrection, she had only dealt with Logos and the Praetorians, so Maria Magdalena had clung to the doctor as the only contact she had in the world. But there was no way she could confess the secret she knew about Horatio. It would cause her incredible pain, and she had no choice now. There was nothing positive in that revelation.

Finally her disgusting consort finished moaning with a final rattle. And he moved to her side of the bed, freeing her body.

She pretended to be satisfied, as if she had felt pleasure. Using any excuse, she went to the bathroom. She felt dirty, as she did every time that man made love to her. She bathed, trying to remove any trace of the despicable being that was Logos. As she let the water and soap slide over her body, she tried to concentrate on Solomon. Thinking about him always gave her hope and peace. She had fallen deeply in love with that strong and loyal man. And she was willing to give her life for him if necessary.

The last time she had left him was when he was about to enter the depths of the castle. But today, as she walked through the village, she absentmindedly asked the merchants about Solomon. And she learned that he had left the hospital and was again leading the human troops. Her heart had skipped a beat with joy.

In a couple of days she wanted to meet him again. But for now, she had to maintain complete discretion and a high level of caution. Logos showed pe-

riodic signs of paranoia, and now he was going through one of those periods.

Logos's attitude gradually became more distrustful over the years. His paranoid periods began with vague comments and inquisitive glances, but soon morphed into clear restrictions: he forbade her access to certain areas of the fortress, limited her outings, insisted that any movement be reported to her in advance. Now, she was practically trapped.

Maria wasn't about to give up, though. She took advantage of the gaming computer she still had in her possession, a tool Logos considered innocuous, to send a message to Solomon. She explained the new restrictions and proposed a plan to stay in touch. They would continue to use a couple of areas within the fortress that the Praetorians didn't patrol frequently and where they could meet without raising suspicion. It would do until such time as Logos changed the password to access the tunnel.

When they met, Maria told him about Logos's growing suspicions and the restrictions he was placing on her. Solomon listened intently, sharing her con-

cern, but also seeking to reassure her. A connection had developed between them that went beyond the plans for resistance or the secrets they shared. In these clandestine meetings, of hurried conversations and strategies, Solomon was her refuge in the midst of danger.

Each visit became a moment of intimacy, an act of defiance against Logos' oppressive control. In the silences, in the glances they exchanged, and in the hugs they shared, she found a space where she could be herself, far from the fear and intrigue that surrounded her.

Maria Magdalena knew that these encounters gave her the strength to endure. The risk was high, but she also knew that she needed to keep that connection alive. Because Solomon was not just an ally, nor a reminder that she still had something to fight for. He was the hope that this life gave her to leave the shadows of the prison that was Logos' fortress.

During one of their secret meetings, Solomon and Maria Magdalena sat face to face. They exchanged their thoughts in low voices.

Maria Magdalena looked at the ground, worried .
"Logos is... different, Solomon. His paranoia grows every day. He looks at me as if he expects me to stab him in the back at any moment."

Solomon asked with a frown. **"Did he say anything directly? Any accusations?"**

Maria Magdalena replied. **"No, but I don't need to say it. His orders, his restrictions... I can't even leave the fortress without his explicit approval anymore. Before, he at least pretended to trust me. Now he's constantly nervous, erratic."** She paused for a deep breath. **"I'm worried something's wrong with him."**

Solomon crossed his arms, thoughtful. **"What do you think is going on?"**

Maria Magdalena leaned closer to him, as if she was afraid someone else might hear her. **"I think her brain isn't working right. Elyndria has never had any records of mental illness that we know of, right? It's weird."**

Solomon pondered. **“We don’t know if Logos has a chip like we do. But what if he does? What if those chips aren’t as foolproof as we think? What if one of them might be corrupted? It wouldn’t be the first time we’ve heard of a virus or memory corruption.”** He paused and leaned forward, intrigued. **“A leader like Logos, with so much power, losing control. What specific behaviors have you noticed?”**

Maria Magdalena paused for a moment, searching for words. **"He's been going over the same documents over and over again, as if he's forgotten he's read them before. Sometimes he talks to himself, but not as if he's pondering, but as if he's arguing with someone who's not there. And he has fits of anger over insignificant things."**

Solomon's expression darkened. **"If he has some sort of mental illness, that could explain his increasing paranoia. But it also makes him more dangerous."**

Maria Magdalena nodded slowly, her gaze fixed on an empty spot. **"There's something else, Solo-**

mon. Something I need to tell you. Something I've kept secret for a long time."

Solomon frowned, worried. "What is it?"

Maria Magdalena looked him in the eyes, her expression guilty. "Logos... intentionally caused the death of Horatio, Lyara's husband."

Solomon gasped in surprise. "What? How do you know?"

Maria Magdalena replied. "I didn't see him directly, but I heard the conversation between Logos and one of the Praetorians. First he ordered him to be sent on a suicide mission, knowing full well that there was little chance of survival. He said he was a 'thorn in the side' of his plans. And during the fight, he interfered to inhibit him momentarily in some way, causing him to be killed. Knowing what I know now, I believe he did it through some computer control."

Solomon looked furious, slamming his clenched fist on the table. "That changes everything. Logos isn't just losing his mind, he's a calculating ki-

ller. Lyara deserves to know the truth, but if we tell her this now... it could jeopardize everything we're trying to do."

Maria Magdalena replied softly. **"I know. But I think I had to tell you. Any of us are in danger. If something happens to me..."-**

Solomon looked into her eyes determinedly. **"I'm not going to let anything happen to you. We need to act carefully. If Logos is really losing control, this could be our best chance to defeat him. But it could also be the moment when he becomes more unpredictable."**

Maria Magdalena sighed, closing her eyes for a moment. **"Then we'll have to be prepared for anything."**

A few days later, at the camp, Solomon, Julius, and Lyara worked tirelessly to decipher the information contained in the three-dimensional hologram and in the computer stolen from the industrial complex. As they studied the data, they noticed something peculiar on the map: among the thousands of rooms that made up the intricate underground sys-

tem, one room stood out, marked as restricted, located near the command center.

Intrigued, they turned their attention to the files associated with that room. According to the records stored on the computer, the room contained a key device, described as an advanced broadcast antenna. The data suggested that this antenna was responsible for sending signals that controlled the chips implanted in the inhabitants of Elyndria, manipulating not only their movements, but also their thoughts and behaviors.

—**"This explains a lot,"** Julius said as he adjusted the focus of the hologram to look in more detail.
—**"If this device controls the chips, it's likely the primary tool to keep the population under control."**

—**"And it could also be our greatest opportunity,"** Solomon added, quickly scrolling through the data on the computer screen. **"But it won't be easy. The room is protected by extremely complex encryption. It won't be a matter of simply walking in."**

Lyara leaned over the table, studying the patterns of the cipher projected on the hologram.

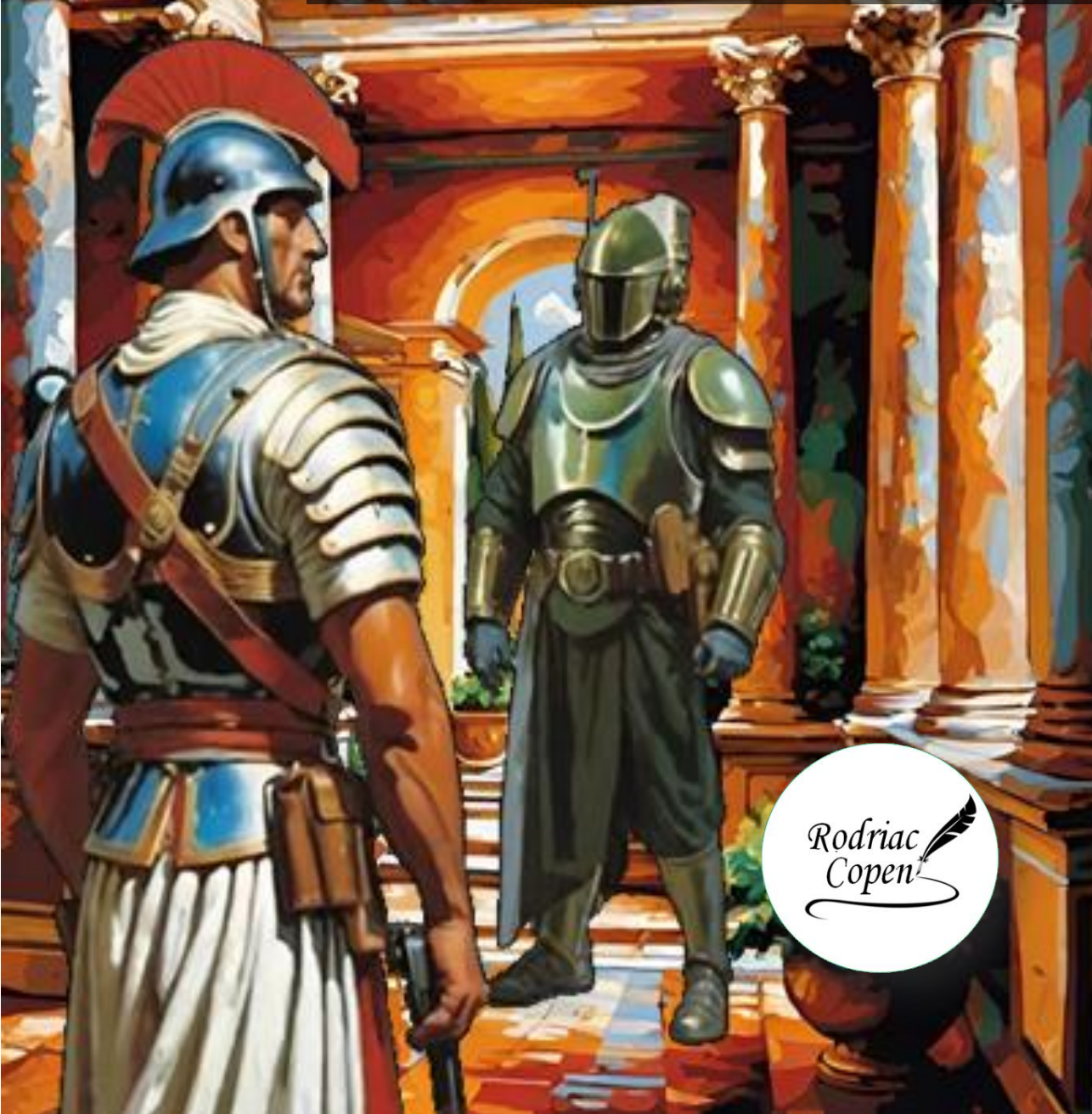
—"Do you think we can figure it out here?"—he asked, with a mix of worry and hope.

Solomon shook his head.

—"Not with the resources we have now. We need access to a computer inside the complex or a tool that allows us to infiltrate the system from within. The problem is that we don't know what kind of security we'll find in that room."

Despite the challenges, the discovery ignited a spark of determination. If they were right and could gain access to that room to neutralize the antenna, they could free the inhabitants of Elyndria from the control of Logos and his oppressive system. However, they also understood that every step they took brought them closer to more exposure, new dangers, and that any mistake could be fatal.

7 Planning The Attack



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It had been a couple of months since Logos’ paranoia had reached its peak. During that time, Maria Magdalena had lived under constant surveillance, limited in her movements and under the scrutiny of the Praetorians. However, as the weeks passed, Logos’ initial spike of madness seemed to have subsided, and the seemingly calmer leader had allowed Maria some freedom, albeit always under carefully calculated pretexts.

One of these permissions was to re-authorize her exit from the fortress with the excuse of going to the market to look for food. Maria Magdalena took advantage of these outings with caution, aware that she was followed by some undercover praetorian who became the eyes and ears of Logos. Over time, she had become quite skilled in her camouflage skills and above all, in her ability to lose herself in the crowd to disorient the praetorian or the spy on duty and vanish among the crowd and the merchants.

Now, those outings and his skills gave him the perfect opportunity to reunite with the group he had formed with Solomon, Lyara and Julius.

On that particular day, Maria arrived at Solomon's shop in the late afternoon, as always, making sure not to be followed. Solomon greeted her with a hug and a kiss once she had crossed the back door of the shop and, going down to the basement, she joined the rest. Lyara was sitting by a table covered in tools and some electronic parts, while Julius was inspecting some schematics they had obtained from the stolen hologram.

—**“You came just in time,”** Solomon said as he closed the door to the basement. **“We have a lot to talk about.”**

“What's new?” asked Maria Magdalena, taking off the cloak she was wearing to go unnoticed.

—**“We've made some progress in interpreting the data from the three-dimensional map,”** Julius replied, showing him the portable device with an active holographic projection. —**“It seems that the most protected areas are not only related to**

the control of the chips. There is something else at play."

—"Anything else?"— Maria repeated, frowning.

—"Yes," Lyara intervened, pointing to a specific spot on the map. "We believe that this sector hides other things besides the control device. According to the fragments of information we have deciphered, there could be complete files of information. Details about the inhabitants of Elyndria, their origins... even records of what happened before our arrival here."

Maria Magdalena leaned over the hologram, watching intently. The prospect of uncovering Elyndria's best-kept secrets made her heart race.

—"If what they say is true, this could be key," he murmured. "But it also means that Logos won't let anyone get close. The place must be full of traps and security."

—"Exactly," Solomon said, crossing his arms. "That's why we must plan our next move with precision. If we're going to infiltrate again,

we'll have to be more careful than ever this time."

—"That also means that we must be prepared for the worst," Lyara added seriously, looking each of them in the eyes. **—"If they discover us, there will be no second chance."**

The group nodded silently. They knew that time was not on their side and that every misstep could seal their fate. But they also knew that they were getting closer to understanding the truth about Elyndria, Logos, and the mysterious purpose of that world.

The group had discovered that there was a critical device in the industrial complex, a sort of signal-emitting antenna that controlled the chips implanted in the inhabitants of Elyndria. They had managed to identify its location on the holographic map, but so far, they could not fully understand how it worked or what exactly it did. The code that controlled its operation was protected by an incredibly complex cipher, too advanced to be deciphered with the limited resources they had in the basement of Solomon's shop.

Solomon sat in front of the computer stolen from the compound, rubbing his temples in frustration. Bagdad's batteries worked like a primitive battery, much to Julius's delight, because every time Solomon needed to work on the computer, he was the one chosen to pedal like a sprinter.

Now the screen projected endless lines of assembly code and constantly changing patterns, as if the programming itself was designed to confuse any intruder.

—"This is a puzzle," he said, gently knocking his fist on the table. **"This level of encryption is beyond what I can open with the tools I have here."**

Julius leaned over his shoulder, examining the screen.

—"It's like the code has a layer that constantly mutates," he said. **"Every time you try to decipher it, it seems to reconfigure itself. Do you think it's a self-defense system?"**

—"Yes. It's a kind of polymorphism. It was used a lot in some computer viruses on Earth.

So they wouldn't be recognized by antiviruses, which looked for fixed patterns, not variables."- Solomon answered, turning to him —"If we could access the device directly, maybe I could find a protocol to decrypt its content."-

Lyara, who was sitting nearby with her arms crossed, chimed in:

—"Accessing the device directly means returning to the industrial complex, this time much closer to the command center. Do you realize the risk? That area must be protected like a fortress within the fortress."

—"I know," Solomon admitted, leaning forward with his hands clasped together. **"But if we don't crack this code, we won't be able to know for sure how they manipulate the chips. And if we don't know that, we'll never be able to truly free ourselves."**

Maria Magdalena, who had remained silent until then, broke her silence:

—"What if we manage to gain access to Logos' main system?"— He suggested, his voice heavy

with tension— **"It's possible that their terminal has some kind of master access to the device or encryption."**-

The others looked at each other, considering the possibility. Entering the Logos system was a plan none of them had seriously considered until that moment. It was practically suicide. But the alternative was to remain stagnant, with no answers and no clear path forward.

—**"We'd have to plan it carefully,"** Lyara said after a moment's thought. —**"If we manage to divert his attention, perhaps someone could access his terminal while he's busy. But we'd need a distraction of epic proportions to achieve that."**

—**"Or rather than a distraction... perhaps it would be more effective if we took the Fortress and caught Logos."**— Julius added. —**"It's not impossible. For the four of us, perhaps, but we can recruit people. I think we might have a chance."**—

—**"Then it's time to start planning."**— Solomon said with determination —**"Sooner or later**

this will be a necessary step; it is our only way to have control... and stop the plan that led to the creation of Elyndria."-

The group stood in silence for a moment, letting the gravity of the decision sink in. They knew that what they were about to attempt was an extremely dangerous move, but they also couldn't just sit back and do nothing. The future of Elyndria and its inhabitants depended on them, and even if the price of their mission was high, they were willing to pay it.

The group fell into a serious discussion about the possibility of taking control of the fortress. It was a topic that had come up in previous conversations, but now, with more information about the industrial complex and the extent of Logos' power, the idea was becoming more solid. Solomon, Lyara, Julius, and Maria Magdalena sat around a makeshift table next to the computer, with the projected holographic blueprints and bits of data collected from the industrial complex.

—"If we decide to do so," Solomon began, frowning as he adjusted the holographic map. **"We**

must first consider the resources we have at our disposal. We know there are loyal soldiers who would be willing to join us. But how many will we need to succeed? And how will we distribute them for the assault?"

—"That's a problem," Lyara said, drumming her fingers on the table. "We don't know if Logos has reserve troops hidden somewhere in the underground complex. There are areas we've never been able to access. They could be warehouses, barracks, or even hangars with something worse."

—"What if he has a ship?" Julius intervened, his tone thoughtful. —"If things get complicated for him, he could escape the planet and leave us here to face the consequences. We have been told that this is the only planet in the universe that we inhabit, but now I am not so sure. If he wants to hide a way to escape, the best thing is to lie to us about the true nature of this place."

Maria Magdalena nodded slowly, her eyes fixed on the projected map.

—"I've thought about it too. There may be things beyond this world, perhaps even other inhabited planets. And if that's true, it could mean that we've been trapped for hundreds of years in a bubble controlled by Logos, not knowing what's really out there."

Lyara sighed and crossed her arms, leaning back in her seat.

—"Is it possible that we are inhabiting a different universe than Earth?" He asked, looking at the others seriously . "We also don't know what time we are living in. There are no references. Hundreds or thousands of years could have passed since our memories of Earth, if this place has any relation to Earth."

Solomon, who had been silent while the others spoke, finally intervened.

—"I think Earth has been dead for a long time," he said with conviction. "Everything we've seen here points to a completely different civilization, something designed to control us, to manipulate us. If there is anything human left in this system, it is hidden, or destroyed."

—"We may never know," Julius added, a hint of frustration in his tone. **"But there must be answers somewhere. This system, this planet... it was all designed for a purpose. And if we understand who did it and why, we might find some answers."**

Maria Magdalena leaned forward, looking at Julius.

—"I agree with you," he said firmly. **"If we find those answers, we'll be able to decide our next step more clearly. But in the meantime, we need to prepare for the worst. If Logos has an exit, we must prevent him from using it. And if he has reserve forces, we need to be ready to face them. In all the years I've lived with him, I can't say anything that will help us in that regard. There are entire areas of the fortress that he's never allowed me to enter."**

The group nodded silently, aware of the enormous difficulties they faced. It wasn't just about overthrowing Logos; there were far greater uncertainties about the true nature of Elyndria, its connection to the universe, and the possibility that everything they knew was a carefully constructed lie.

The group came to an agreement after discussing strategy. By their calculations, Logos had about 300 Praetorians fully trained and ready to defend it. Of that total, they estimated that 200 were stationed in the fortress, while the other 100 guarded the underground complex. Solomon's assumption was based on his recent raid, where he had not found a significant Praetorian presence in the areas he explored.

Julius, ever methodical, made a key point.

—"If we are to storm the fortress, someone must be left in charge of the troops to defend our territory. The zoolotes have intensified their attacks lately, and they are becoming more frequent and brutal. We cannot leave our defenses unprotected."

Solomon nodded. He knew that the zoolotes were a constant threat, but he was also clear on another important point.

—"There is no way to negotiate with them," he said, convinced. —"Trying a peace agreement like the one we have with the Pleiadians is use-

less. The zoolotes do not understand agreements, only force."

Lyara looked up from the projected map and added another concern.

—"Let us not forget the Arcturians. They have also begun to invade our borders from the north. If we do not strengthen our position soon, we could face a war on multiple fronts."

Maria Magdalena, who had been silent for a while, intervened with an idea that seemed to put the pieces of the puzzle together.

—"Taking control of the fortress will not only allow us to take control of the planet and get rid of Logos. It will also consolidate our position with the other races of Elyndria. With control over the fortress, we can send messages of strength and stability that will facilitate future peace negotiations with the other species."

Everyone agreed that taking the fortress was crucial to securing the future of the humans in Elyndria. They estimated that if they managed to recruit about 400 loyal soldiers, they would have enough

forces to carry out the assault on both the fortress and the industrial complex. But they couldn't reveal their true intentions right away. Any information leak could be disastrous.

Julius suggested a strategy that everyone approved of.

—"Let's start recruiting under the excuse of creating an elite group. We will tell them that it will be a special corps to face the zoolotes and protect our borders. For now, they don't need to know that their true objective will be to take control of the fortress."

With the plan in place, each took on a specific role. Solomon and Lyara began identifying soldiers who might be loyal to their cause. Maria Magdalena, taking advantage of her access to the fortress, sought out additional information on the Praetorians and any hidden resources that might be useful. Julius, for his part, began to devise tactical strategies for the attack, based on the knowledge they already had of the location and the holographic map.

The clock was ticking. They knew they could not afford to make any mistakes, but they also unders-

tood that each passing day increased the risk that Logos would discover their movements. The operation had to be quick and precise if they were to succeed in their rebellion.

After a long day of fending off attacks from zoolotes and Arcturians, Julius and Lyara had sought refuge in the restful night's sleep. While the man slept soundly beside her, Lyara sank into a storm of thoughts that kept her awake. The image of Horatio, her late lover, emerged with painful clarity in her mind. She remembered the confusion and suffering his death had caused her, especially that disturbing detail mentioned to her by the troops under her command: how, for an instant, his body seemed to freeze before dying. A shadow of doubt and strangeness enveloped that memory, and the mystery still tormented her.

Her attention then shifted to Julius. She looked at his face, relaxed in sleep, and felt a lump form in her throat. The thought of losing him was unbearable. She herself did not fear death; she had long since accepted the brutality and fragility of life in Elyndria. But the thought of being alone, of wandering this empty, wild, cruel world without him, was

unbearable. Julius gave her a reason to keep going, a hope that, perhaps, things could change.

She closed her eyes, trying to escape her own demons, but the faces of those she had killed in combat began to parade before her. The expressions of terror, the heart-wrenching screams, the echo of her own emotions in those final moments of inevitable violence. Each face carried with it a weight she could never forget. She shuddered at the memory, and a tremor ran through her body, as she took refuge in Julius's arms. He, still asleep, instinctively hugged her, and in that gesture she found a spark of comfort, a small shelter of warmth in the midst of her inner torment.

Before she gave in to sleep, her thoughts wandered into a past that seemed to belong to another life. She remembered her days as a doctor in a hospital on Earth, the bustle of the corridors, the frenetic pace of the emergency rooms, and the pride she felt in saving lives. The faces of her parents formed clearly in her mind, followed by those of her two sons and the man who had been her husband. A pang of nostalgia hit her, a longing for a time that no longer existed.

Solomon's words suddenly echoed in her mind: if the Soul Archive held the dead, was it possible that their loved ones were also in Elyndria, fighting and killing like her? The thought turned her stomach, filling her with disgust and revulsion towards the reality of this decaying, rotting world. She felt a deep contempt for whoever had designed this wicked existence. With that dark thought lingering, she finally allowed herself to fall into a restless sleep, sheltered in the arms of Julius, the only anchor she had left in the midst of chaos.

Meanwhile, in a dark, cold room within the fortress, the faint hum of electronic devices could be heard. Logos sat in front of a holographic screen, and the image of a towering alien appeared in the air. His features were barely discernible beneath the metallic blue sheen of the armor that covered him completely.

The A-Quon said in a deep, resonant voice. **"Logos, your reputation as a competent manufacturer is in question. The last army you provided us has proven... unacceptable. Their combat skills are below standard. The losses in recent engagements are intolerable."**

Logos replied, leaning forward slightly, his voice cold and calculating. **"I apologize, my lord. But I must point out that any failure in the fighters' performance cannot be attributed solely to their manufacture. The quality parameters of my factory are impeccable. Perhaps your supervisors or strategists failed to equip them properly. They were assault troops, trained to use handguns, not lasers or rifles."**

The A-Quon showed a threatening glint in the slits of his eyes. The helmet covered the entirety of his head and face. **"You dare to blame us, Logos? Do not forget who holds your position in Elyndria. Or do you need me to remind you what happened to your predecessors when they failed to meet our expectations?"-**

Logos was unfazed, with a slight smile. **"No, there is no need. I value our business relationship. Allow me to suggest a solution. If this army does not meet your needs, I can proceed with its immediate elimination. I will replace every defective unit with new, fully optimized ones. Naturally, at no transaction cost to you. Just tell**

me the weapons you have and I will prepare the appropriate batch of fighters you need.”

The A-Quon responded with a slight grunt, assessing the offer. **“Eliminate them? Just like that? They are expensive resources, even if they don’t meet our expectations.”**

Logos replied with contempt . **“Recyclable resources. Each one of them is a manufactured unit, nothing more. I can guarantee that the process will be clean and efficient. If you wish, I can provide a detailed report of the dismantling. In my factory, there is no room for imperfections.”**

The A-Quon showed a tone of disdain. **-“You show not one iota of consideration for these units. They are not just raw material to us, Logos. Each of them has an associated cost, a military purpose that must be fulfilled. We cannot afford your mistakes. Lives do not matter to us. But your mistakes prevent us from reaching our military objectives.”-**

Logos was almost mechanically calm. **“Make no mistake, my lord. All I care about is the success**

of our transaction. And for that to happen, you must be happy with the service I offer you. The inhabitants of Elyndria are replaceable elements. Their value is in their usefulness, not in their existence. I am willing to correct any defect because I understand that my reputation, and our alliance, demand it."

After a long pause, in which he measured his words, the A-Quon replied. **"You better deliver, Logos. You won't get a second chance if you fail us again. We want a new army in two planetary cycles. One that will be able to take on the defending forces without falling apart like a poorly assembled trinket."**

Logos slightly bowed his head in a gesture of submission. **"Consider it done. The next army will live up to your expectations. The resources of our Elyndria factory are practically unlimited."**

The A-Quon showed one last menacing flash. - **"Don't forget, Logos. We are all replaceable."**-

Logos wiped the smile off his face the moment the hologram disappeared. He muttered to himself. **"No one is truly irreplaceable. Not even you."**

He slammed the table with a stick he held in his hands. He was furious.



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8 The Assault On The Fortress

The morning before the attack, on the plain near the human camp, a thick fog covered the ground, but it failed to hide the latent energy among the ranks of the soldiers. Solomon and Julius had called all the fighters together to give the last instructions and reveal the true purpose of their mission. Solomon, in his rank of general, stood on an improvised platform, his silhouette barely visible under the dim light of the torches that tried to break the darkness before dawn. His voice broke the silence like thunder:

- "Brothers and sisters of Elyndria, this dawn will mark the beginning of something we have waited for too long. We have been kept subjugated, controlled, reduced to cogs in a machine that does not serve our lives, but the whims of a tyrant. Today, this will change definitively." -

A murmur ran through the ranks. Julius, standing beside him, raised his hand for silence. When everyone looked at him, he spoke up to say:

- "I know that many of you have felt fear. And we are all fed up with fear. Fear of the zooles, of the Arcturians, of death. But the greatest fear, the one that consumes us every day, is the fear of not having control over our own lives. Tonight, that fear will transform into strength. We are going to take what is rightfully ours: our freedom." - He took a moment to see the reactions and continued - "We are going to face the Praetorians of Logos!" -

Solomon cried out in a firm voice, pointing towards the camp - **"Yes, we will! But do not underestimate what we are capable of when we fight for something bigger than ourselves. They fight for Logos. We fight for our very lives. For our partners, our friends, for Elyndria itself. Do not forget: the Praetorians are not invincible. We have faced worse enemies and we are still here!" - A cry of victory arose from the troops.**

Julius continued to encourage the troops - **"And if we fail, we will have died by our own decision. No surprise confrontation at dawn! We did not have a choice when we were resurrected, but**

we can control our destiny! We can choose when and how to die. Like soldiers!" -

Julius's words seemed to ignite a spark. The murmurs grew in intensity, turning into shouts of approval. The soldiers began to raise their weapons, some shouting, others cheering with excitement. The human camp, usually charged with tension and resignation, filled with an electrifying energy.

Solomon harangued **"Today we fight for Elyndria! Today we fight for our freedom! Come to me!"-**

A deafening roar rose from the ranks. The soldiers, men and women of different backgrounds, raised their weapons and shouted in unison. **"For Elyndria! For freedom!"-**

Solomon, Julius and Lyara had managed to unite everyone during the harangue to fight for the same cause. The fog was beginning to dissipate, while the three suns of the Elyndrian sky began to appear on the distant horizon. The fears that had tormented the inhabitants of Elyndria for years were beginning to dissipate.

The first rays of the sun were beginning to tint the sky in shades of orange as the troops formed into columns, ready to march towards the fortress. The atmosphere was charged with promises of change and the possibility of a new beginning. They formed into three columns, each led by a commander with a clear mission. Tension mixed with determination in the air.

Lyara and Julius stood at the side of the camp, away from the hustle and bustle of the soldiers checking their weapons for the last time. The first rays of the sun illuminated their faces, revealing the emotions contained in both of them.

Lyara spoke in a soft voice, looking at the horizon - **"Everything is ready. My column is prepared to infiltrate through the tunnel. We will reach the catacombs and climb up until we meet you. But... Julius... this is not a simple battle. It is a war of extermination. Them or us. And you are leading the frontal attack, you will be on the most dangerous front."** -

Julius took Lyara's hand gently - **"I know, beautiful Lyara. But if this works, if we manage to de-**

feat Logos, it will be the beginning of the end of this cursed regime of extermination. And if something happens to me..." - He paused - "I want you to know that every day with you has been a gift. I don't regret anything." - He kissed her hand.

Lyara stared at him, her eyes refusing to shed the tears they held within. She knew Julius was telling the truth, but she also knew the risks were real.

Lyara replied, "I don't want goodbyes. Promise me you'll survive. Promise me you'll come back."

Julius smiled tenderly, as he caressed her face . "I promise you, Lyara. I will do my best to stay alive. But also promise me something: if something happens to me, keep going. Elyndria needs someone like you, someone who can heal what this world has broken."

She couldn't respond immediately. Instead, she hugged him tightly, clinging to him as if by doing so she could protect him from the danger that was coming.

Lyara whispered close to his ear , **"I'm not going to lose you, Julius. I can't."**

They slowly parted, and Julius kissed her with a sense of farewell. The Praetorians were waiting for him, the most terrible opponents that could be found in the world of Elyndria. They both returned to the camp to give their final orders.

While Lyara and Julius had their moment, Solomon reviewed the three-dimensional map with some of his trusted men. The holographic representation of the complex showed the tunnels, underground chambers, and routes to the unknown areas.

A soldier pointed to a section of the map - **"Here, beyond the catacombs, the map has no data. What do you think we will find there, General?"**

Solomon snorted deeply. **"I don't know. Maybe nothing. Maybe everything. But we can't turn back. If what we think is true, Logos has been hiding something important in those depths. And if we're going to free Elyndria, we need to know what it is. Now is the time to know the truth."**

Another soldier asked, **"What if it's a trap?"**

Solomon smiled wryly. **"All of Elyndria is a trap, soldier. We have no choice. Freedom is not won for free. It is conquered. Freedom given away is an empty victory."**

The soldiers nodded, trusting their leader. Solomon was silent for a moment, staring at the hologram with a mix of anxiety and determination.

Solomon recited words that came back to him from the distant days of his childhood. His father used to say: **"Providence, fate, or whoever put us here... better be on our side."** Somewhere deep in his heart, a tear of blood welled up. He gripped his sword tightly.

The troops began their march, the three columns led by Solomon, Lyara and Julius.

Julius turned to his column. **"Our job is simple. We attack head-on, through the main gates. It will be dangerous, but our distraction will allow Lyara and her team to enter the heart of the fortress. We fight not only for ourselves, but for all**

who have suffered under Logos' rule. We are the tip of the spear!"

A roar of approval went up from the ranks. They followed their leader. They would kill or be killed in the final assault.

Lyara stood at the inner end of the tunnel, about to open the door. On the other side would be Maria Magdalena, waiting for them. She turned to her team. **"We will infiltrate from underground. Our advantage is surprise. Move quickly, be precise, and remember: we must force the Praetorians to the front, where Julius will be waiting for us. Let us not underestimate the enemy."** The soldiers nodded seriously.

Finally, Solomon, with a small, hand-picked group, gave his own orders. **"We will head into the industrial complex. What we will find is unknown. We may encounter resistance, or we may not. Whatever it is, our goal is to secure the depths of the complex and uncover the secrets Logos has kept from us. If anything happens to me, do not turn back. Keep going, no matter what."**

The final order was to capture Logos alive. They needed him to be able to talk and reveal everything he knew. The soldiers were not to destroy any computer systems. What was stored there could be the key to understanding how the planet worked.

Finally, each column took up its position, and the troops began to move silently towards their objectives, with the fate of Elyndria hanging in the balance.

After Lyara, Solomon's column infiltrated the tunnel to seek out the depths of the last undergrounds and advance on the underground industrial complex. Maria Magdalena briefly argued with Solomon. Her hair was disheveled from the recent chaos, and her beautiful face shone in the torchlight.

Maria Magdalena said desperately: **"Let me go with you! I know I'm not a soldier, but I can help. I'm not going to stay hidden while you all risk your lives for a cause that is also mine."**

Solomon replied in a firm and understanding voice - **"I cannot allow this, Maria. This is not a game or an adventure. You were never trained for**

battle. If I give you a weapon, it will be more dangerous for you than for the Praetorians. If you die because of me, all this will have been in vain for me."

She lowered her head, frustrated but aware of the truth in Solomon's words. Despite her feelings, she understood that she was more of a symbol of Logos' oppression than a warrior. But that didn't make accepting the decision any easier.

Maria Magdalena said bitterly, **"So I hide as if I were a coward? As if my life were worth more than others."**

Solomon softened his tone . **"Without you, this fight for freedom would not have been possible. Your life is worth it. A lot, Maria. But you are worth more alive. Fighting on the front is not your battle. It is ours, because we are soldiers. Now all we need is for you to be safe."**

Solomon gestured to five soldiers waiting nearby. Their armor reflected the dim light of the torchlight. He pointed at the soldiers. **"They will take you to safety. And they will protect you until**

this is over.” They were his best soldiers. His most loyal. His bravest.

Maria Magdalena looked into his eyes, and for a moment, the air seemed to stand still. She knew that this might be the last time she would see him. Her voice cracked and she said, **"I don't want you to die, Solomon. I've lost too much. I can't lose you too."**

Without another word, she launched herself at him, hugging him tightly. Solomon, though surprised, returned the hug. Then, gently, he lifted her face and kissed her. It was a brief kiss, as if they were both trying to hold on to the moment forever.

Solomon whispered, **"Take care of yourself, Maria. No matter what happens today, Elyndria needs you alive."**

She nodded silently, turning away as tears filled her eyes. Without looking back, she was escorted by the guards to a safe haven.

Lyara led her column fighting on the underground stairs, seeking the upper floors of the fortress. She knew that Julius's forces had to bypass the main ga-

tes and advance through the front courtyard, seeking the stairs to enter the building. The Praetorians' defense would be fierce.

Lyara, inside the building, between the attacks of the guards, shouted -**"Move quickly. Hit hard and go up to flank them."** - She wiped the blood of a praetorian that splashed her face. - **"Leave no survivors and maintain the formation. We will not have another chance."**-

At the front, Julius was haranguing his troops, who were facing the heavy, heavily guarded gates at the entrance to the inner perimeter of the fortress. He shouted:

-**"This is the day that will change everything! For us, for Elyndria! Push! We will take every damn corner of this place!"**-

With a deafening roar, the soldiers charged the gates, which held until a battering ram smashed them to pieces. The inferno had intensified. Inside the fortress, the fighting was fierce. The Praetorians, soldiers genetically modified by Logos, offered brutal resistance. The fighting in the vast courtyard

took place meter by meter, in a chaos of sword strokes and screams of pain.

Lyara and her team emerged from the tunnels of the catacombs to the ground floor. The group advanced with brutal force and were stopped by a group of Praetorians.

On the right wing, a Praetorian shouted - **"Intruders! Defend the stairs!"**

Hand-to-hand combat was inevitable. Lyara saw a soldier fall to the ground, his head split open. Blood splattered across his hair and left arm. Brandishing her sword, she plunged it deep into the defender's neck, severing the vena cava. A shower of blood billowed from the wound as the soldier let out a final death rattle.

Lyara led her men with unwavering fury. She screamed:

- "Don't stop! Push them! Julius is waiting for us! Let's exterminate them" - She was covered in enemy blood.

From the front, Julius pressed on without mercy. Casualties were heavy, but his men kept moving forward, driven by his leadership. At a critical moment, he confronted a Praetorian blocking a key gate. Furious, he pointed his sword at the Praetorian and shouted, **“You will not stop me.”** As he charged forward with all his might.

The Praetorian made a twisting motion with his sword, like a crescent moon. Julius felt a stab of pain as the sword tore open a wound in his right chest. A jet of blood splashed across his face. The taste was salty. As the Praetorian struggled to regain his position, he stabbed his sword under the Praetorian's chin. He felt the sound of the bones in his skull splintering, and immediately, the Praetorian's body went limp. There had been no scream as he died. It was instantaneous.

Finally, after a couple of hours of fighting, Lyara and Julius' forces converged on the center of the fortress. The Praetorians were defeated. Feverish, the attackers tracked them down to finish them off without mercy. Lyara and Julius' order was for total annihilation, without mercy. They followed the orders to the letter.

Bodies of friends and enemies alike lay everywhere, the smell of blood and open guts permeated the air. The ferocity could be smelled even in the outskirts of the fortress.

Lyara, exhausted, came to Julius with her face covered in sweat, blood and dirt. She sighed and said, **"We did it. But... at what price."**

Julius breathed heavily, looking at the fallen. **"We won't stop now. Solomon is in the depths. We need to secure control, catch Logos, and end this once and for all."**

Lyara saw the wound on Julius' chest and stopped him with a gesture. She opened her lover's bloody clothes and saw a deep cut. Fat protruded from the depth and oozed blood and serum. She asked a subordinate for the first aid kit and proceeded to suture him right there, amidst the chaos of the end of the battle.

When it was over, they exchanged a glance. They wiped the blood off their faces as best they could before kissing each other. They separated to lead the troops into the inner chambers, knowing that the real battle was not over yet.

The fortress was silent, except for the echo of the soldiers' footsteps as they walked through the corridors making sure there were no hidden enemies.

Word reached Solomon that Julius and Lyara's troops had taken control above, in the fortress, but at a high cost. Down there, inside the industrial complex, the bodies of the Praetorians lay alongside those of the soldiers who had given their lives to win freedom for Elyndria.

Solomon's one hundred and twenty soldiers had met resistance only in the initial section of the complex. Now the bulk of the troops were limited to running from room to room exterminating Praetorian defenders. The ratio here was three attackers to one defender loyal to Logos.

In the complex, only the defending soldiers reacted, the rest of the operators simply looked at the invaders indifferently, ignoring them and continuing with their tasks. Solomon's soldiers quickly covered the volume of the immense complex.

With control secured, Solomon, Julius, Lyara, and Maria Magdalena gathered in a large room that had once served as the fortress's command center. The

atmosphere was filled with a mix of victory and grief. Casualties had been numerous, and though they had achieved their objective, the price still weighed heavily on them.

Julius said in a deep voice. **"We've done it. The fortress and the complex are ours. But we lost too many men. We need to reinforce the defenses. We don't know if Logos had any contingency plans."**

Lyara sat down on a makeshift chair, her face reflecting the exhaustion she carried within her. - **"This is just the beginning. If Logos had additional troops outside the fortress, we could be in danger of a counterattack."**-

Maria Magdalena looked around with a pained expression - **"Let us not let their deaths be in vain. This must mark the beginning of a real change for Elyndria."** -

Before they could continue deliberating, a group of soldiers entered the room, escorting a man. Logos, still dressed in his impeccable uniform, but with a mixture of rage, humiliation and disbelief evident

on his face. He was chained. A soldier pushed him forward, forcing him to stagger before the leaders.

The soldier explained in a military tone. **"We caught him trying to access what appears to be an escape elevator in the south sector. It was necessary to break and destroy some of his security systems to get him out, sir."**

Logos looked at Julius with disdain. **"An army of peasants... destroying what I have built. Elyndria is doomed without my control."**

Julius replied sharply. **"Elyndria was already doomed under your control. But now, you will pay for your crimes. Were you trying to run away like a rat, Logos? And your manhood? Where was that elevator taking you?"**

Logos tried to laugh ironically - **"Do you think I'll tell you? My secrets are beyond the reach of such... rudimentary minds."** -

Lyara stepped forward, her face hardened. She said, **"We know you have secrets. But if you cooperate, you might be able to salvage some of what**

little remains of your miserable existence." She punched him.

Logos stepped back to spit out the blood. Lyara's blow had split his mouth. He remained silent, staring at Lyara as if trying to analyze her. Julius broke the moment with an order. Turning to the soldier who had spoken earlier he said, **"Get a team to the elevator. See where it leads. If it's an escape route or a hidden level, I want to know. And make sure no one else tries to use it. Post guards at every elevator access point you find. No one is to use it."**

The soldier nodded. **"Immediately, sir."**

The group quickly left, leaving Logos guarded by two other armed soldiers. Solomon, who had remained silent, observing the scene, approached Logos. In a calm voice he said, **"What you have done here is unjustified. You have enslaved not only bodies, but souls as well. But all this ends today."**

Logos laughed scornfully, **"It ends today? You're barely scratching the surface. Elyndria is more than this fortress, more than me. Everything**

you think you've gained is nothing more than an illusion."

Maria Magdalena, who had remained silent, stepped forward, looking at him with a mixture of pity and disappointment. She said, **"Perhaps you are right, Logos. Perhaps this is just the beginning. But right now, you don't seem very intelligent, rather you look defeated. Everyone in Elyndria is tired of suffering, and we have taken away your power over us."**

Logos did not answer, but his cold, calculating gaze hinted that he might have a few cards up his sleeve. Julius, taking the floor, concluded the meeting by addressing his companions - **"We have won the fortress, but this victory does not mean that everything will be easier now. We must prepare for what may come. And make sure that Logos does not have a chance to escape."** -

Solomon ordered a group of soldiers to make preparations for a part of the fortress to be made ready as a prison for Logos. And for it to be heavily guarded. The soldiers pushed Logos into his new residence, leaving the room.

With that last order from Solomon, the group began planning their next steps, while in the back of the complex the soldiers investigated the enigmatic elevator that Logos had tried to use. Uncertainty still hung over their heads, but with each step, hope remained alive and mysteries became visible.

The hours passed slowly as Julius, Lyara, Solomon, and Maria Magdalena deliberated on the next steps in the makeshift command room. The air was thick with tension, and everyone knew that the fate of Elyndria depended on the decisions that were made. It was then that the group of soldiers returned, covered in dust and with expressions of a mixture of shock and concern.

The soldier leading the elevator exploration group saluted Julius. **"Sir, we have investigated the elevator and have important information."**

Julius sat up straight. **"Speak. What did you find?"**

The soldier exchanged a quick glance with his companions before continuing. **"The elevator took us deeper into the industrial complex. There we discovered a massive underground hangar. It's**

equipped with advanced technology, far more sophisticated than anything we've seen on Earth."

Solomon asked him, "On Earth, in what era did you live?"

The soldier replied, "I died in 2032, sir."

Lyara turned to the soldier with a frown. "What kind of technology? Be specific".

The soldier replied in a serious tone. -"Three enormous transport ships, Miss. Each of them seems designed to carry troops. I believe they are interplanetary, to go into space. They are tied up in the hangar, they seemed ready for takeoff to me. In addition, there are colossal tunnels that seem to be the exit channels for these ships."-

An uneasy murmur ran through the room. Solomon stepped forward, one hand on his chin, clearly pondering what he had just heard.

Solomon asked in a grave voice. "Were you able to determine exactly if they are operational?"

Are there additional troops or Praetorians in that area?"

The lead soldier replied, **"We didn't see any active soldiers, but the place was fully automated. There are machines and systems running, and from what we could see, the ships are in perfect condition. They seem ready to take off at any moment. Within the group, we have a member who was a space engineer on Earth, who died in 2055. To him they looked like operational ships, sir."**

Maria Magdalena intervened with a mixture of caution and concern. **"More troops? How many more could Logos have hidden in this place?"**

Lyara replied. **-"Maybe they're not for the Praetorians, Maria. This looks like a production line for soldiers. Maybe they're ships to transport soldiers to another planet."** Turning to the soldier, she said **-"Did you check the control systems? Is there access to the computers from that level?"-**

The lead soldier replied to his superior - **"Negative, Miss. The security systems are advanced**

and we did not have the keys. We were unable to gain access without activating protocols that could have alerted any defense systems still active." - That particular leader showed remarkable initiative and insight.

Julius said firmly. **"They did the right thing. The last thing we need is to activate some automated system that puts our troops in danger."**

The four leaders of the victorious rebellion exchanged glances as they pondered the new information. Solomon broke the silence.

-"Those ships represent a threat... but also an opportunity. If they are fully functional, they could have been Logos' escape plan or the means to mobilize an army. At some point we will be able to use them."-

Lyara spoke as she turned her gaze to Julius - **"We must ensure that those ships are not used against us. If we can control them, they could be an invaluable tool in consolidating our position."** -

Julius said in a resolute tone - **"First we will secure the hangar and neutralize it if necessary. We cannot allow Logos or anyone else to have access to that kind of power."** - He paused and continued - **"We will try to locate spaceship pilots among the human troops. Tell me Solomon, how about asking the Pleiadians about this? They were more evolved than the Earthlings and were already operating intergalactic ships when I died on Earth. I don't think the Arcturians or the Zoolotes will want to cooperate."** -

Solomon scratched his chin doubtfully. **"Let's wait and see where events take us, my friend. The Pleiadians should be our last card."**

Turning to the lead soldier, Julius gave a clear order. **"Take an additional group and secure the area. If you find any active threats, fall back and report them immediately. Do not take unnecessary risks."**

The soldier leading the group nodded. **"Yes, sir. We will make sure everything is under control."**

As the soldier left with his team, Maria Magdalena broke her silence to ask a question that reflected the uncertainty in the air. **"Do you think this is all that Logos had hidden? Or are we just seeing the tip of the iceberg?"**

Solomon replied, his tone a mixture of pragmatism and caution. **"In a place like this, we can never be sure. But the important thing is that every step we take brings him closer to the end of his regime. It seems to me that everything will come to light as we investigate the entire system and review all the information in the computers, my dear."**

The group fell silent for a moment, each lost in their own thoughts. The battle for Elyndria was not over yet, but they all knew they had taken a very important step towards tipping the fate of the planet in their favor.

The Fortress was a monument to Logos' opulence and excess, a titanic complex built not only for military functionality, but to satisfy the whims of a tyrant.

The five floors of the structure contained a labyrinth of rooms and hallways, each decorated with overwhelming luxury that seemed a mockery of the suffering of the rest of Elyndria's inhabitants, who lived as if in Roman times.

There were internal gardens that flourished under artificial sunlight provided by a complex fiber optic system. The rays of the three suns, channeled from outside, bathed the plants and cobblestone paths in such a realistic way that one could forget one was inside a building.

Pools of crystal-clear water, bordered by mosaics made of precious stones, occupied central areas, surrounded by ornate columns with gold and silver detailing. The internal apartments were small palaces in themselves, with high ceilings, walls covered in marble panels, and custom-made furniture made from materials so rare they seemed otherworldly. Each space was designed to offer maximum comfort, from feather beds that floated lightly on magnetic platforms to environmental control systems that adjusted temperature and lighting according to the occupant's mood.

Solomon and Maria Magdalena walked together down one of the main hallways, taking in the intricate carvings that decorated the niches along the way. Arriving at a new apartment, which they had chosen as their residence, Solomon opened the door and they were both amazed by the spaciousness and splendor of the place.

Solomon smiled as he looked at Maria Magdalena. **"I think this place will be more comfortable than the trenches I have offered you so far."**

Maria Magdalena had never seen this section of the Fortress before. Running her fingers along a cut-glass table, she said, **"It's... just stunning. But it's also obscene, don't you think? All this wealth, while out there... well, you know what life is like."**

Solomon nodded with a sigh. **"Yes, it is a mockery. We will have a titanic job to bring civilization to the rest of the planet. And perhaps we can use this fortress for something better than to appease the megalomania of a madman."**

Maria Magdalena nodded, though her expression was a mix of wonder and sadness. Meanwhile, Ju-

lius and Lyara explored their own apartment, which was situated near one of the inner gardens. Artificial sunlight reflected off the pool that bordered the space, casting sparkles on the glass walls. Julius walked to the edge of the pool and looked out into the water.

Julius spoke thoughtfully. **"I can't believe this place has been here all this time, while people were suffering in tents."**

Lyara stroked an exotic plant growing by the water. **"It's a reminder of what we're fighting to change. If we ever achieve true control over Elyndria, this place could be a refuge for those in need, not a hiding place for a monster."**

Julius turned to her, smiling. **"You're always thinking ahead, aren't you? That's what I admire about you."**

Lyara smiled slightly. **"And what did you think, that I only like to fight?"**

They both laughed as they hugged each other. Laughter was a rare sound these past few days, but a welcome one.

Night was drawing in. The leaders left some orders, set up some guards, and retreated to their quarters. The next day, Solomon and Maria Magdalena joined Julius and Lyara in one of the inner gardens. Under the artificial sky, the group sat around a table, enjoying a moment of calm for the first time. Although they knew the fighting was not over, they felt they were one step closer to something that could resemble freedom.

That day was memorable. They knew they wouldn't have to fight Arcturians or Zoolotes to survive for the first time since their resurrections.

Maria Magdalena looked around at the gardens .
"It's ironic, isn't it? This place was built to isolate Logos from reality, but now it's ours. Maybe we can give it a better purpose."

Solomon, who was holding her hand, nodded.
"That will depend on the four of us. And also on what we find in the depths of this complex. This is just the beginning."

The group of rebels nodded silently, knowing that the real task was still ahead. However, for a brief

moment, they enjoyed the calm amidst the luxury that was now theirs.



Rodriac
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9 The Heart Of Elyndria

Solomon had spent hours in one of the Stronghold's Command Rooms, surrounded by terminals that projected endless lines of the main code that controlled Elyndria's core functions. The complexity of the system was overwhelming, but his analytical mind had grown accustomed to dealing with puzzles of that nature. As he explored, he deciphered bits of data that appeared to be access codes to different levels of the complex. There was something sinister about the way the systems were structured, as if they were designed to hide secrets that no one was meant to discover.

Finally, his patience was rewarded when he found a shortcut to the core of the **"Archive of Souls"**. As soon as the interface was activated, an endless list of names appeared on the screen, accompanied by alphanumeric codes and descriptions of the state of consciousnesses packed into the memories.

Solomon muttered to himself as he scrolled through the data , **"What the hell is this...? It looks... it looks like a catalog. Not of objects, though, but of people."**

Intrigued, he began to dig deeper into the files. One of the most recurrent pieces of data was a set of protocols labeled **“Mass Reset”**. Each time he tried to access them, he was met with additional layers of encryption. However, with each obstacle he overcame, the nature of the system was revealed more clearly. Elyndria was no simple battlefield; just as Lyara had prophesied when the fortress had been conquered, it was a giant soldier factory.

As he confirmed this, his breathing quickened. The entire planetary structure was designed to take full advantage of each resurrection. Chips implanted in the brains of the combatants stored every skill learned in the daily, deadly contests with which they had tortured the resurrected population for years. With each contest won by each individual, the individual soldier's consciousness was refined and updated the chip's data. That consciousness was relayed to a main antenna, and from there, the system updated the consciousness recorded in the Archive of Souls.

Within the Archives, the individual's consciousness remained, containing the memories, experiences, and abilities that were stored and associated with

each person who had been resurrected on Elyndria. If someone died on the planet, it was not the end: they could be resurrected again. The consciousnesses were reimplanted into new, cloned bodies obtained through an automated process in the industrial complex.

The organic brain of these cloned bodies was replaced by a robotic one, into which the individual's chip was implanted. The body-brain-chip unit was activated and the individual was reincarnated by being embodied in the resurrection temples, distributed throughout the planet. The individuals thus returned to the battlefield to restart the cycle of improvement in combat again and again.

After each battle, the surviving combatants, who were considered '**successful**', would be turned off and passed out for two main reasons. All information from the brain chip was retransmitted to base while the individual was asleep. On the other hand, if they were passed out they could not see the bodies of those killed in combat being collected by helicopters and sent to the industrial complex. At the complex, the chip was removed and re-implanted in another clone and sent back to the battlefield.

The system only fed back by empowering individuals who had been successful in combat. The chips of the dead were reimplanted, but the information was not sent to the central office because it was considered that when units died in battle, they presented defects that were undesirable for the system. Horrible.

Suddenly, a voice interrupted his thoughts. It was Maria Magdalena, who had entered the room and had a worried expression on her face.

Maria Magdalena asked, looking at him from the doorway - **"Solomon... you've been here for hours. What did you find?"**

Solomon turned to her, his eyes filled with disbelief. **"Everything... I found all the answers... or at least the most important ones. This place, Maria, is not just a battlefield. Just like Lyara said, it is a factory. Each of us is a cog in a machine designed to hone soldiers."**

Maria Magdalena approached slowly. - **"What does that mean? How serious is it?"** -

Solomon explained, pointing at the screen. **"Here's the Archive of Souls. Every person who's been resurrected in Elyndria has a copy of their memory, their abilities... everything. When someone dies, they simply use that copy to bring them back, but in a new body, manufactured right here. And those 'Mass Reset' protocols... it could mean they can reboot the entire system, erase memories, adjust abilities... basically, play with our lives like we're chess pieces."**

Maria Magdalena was silent for a moment, processing the information. With a lump in her throat, she asked, **"So, not even our minds are our own? Everything we experience, everything we feel... is just stored data?"**

Solomon nodded slowly. **"Basically, it is. We were turned into something less than human. We are tools, Maria. And the worst thing is that this system can continue to function indefinitely as long as someone controls the Archive, the complex, and the Fortress."**

Maria Magdalena clenched her fists, her face a mixture of anger and horror. **"We have to destroy it. If we let this file exist, we will never be free. We will never be real."**

Solomon explained in a somber tone. **"That would be ideal, my love, but there is a problem. This Archive is also the only thing that keeps the consciousness of everyone in Elyndria alive. If we destroy it, we take with it the ability to resurrect anyone. If someone dies, it will be forever. Additionally, I don't know what would happen to those who are alive. There is an interdependency between us and this complex. I have no definitive conclusions yet."**

The silence that followed between the two was crushing. They both knew there was no easy answer. The Soul Archive was both a prison and a salvation, a twisted system that defied any moral logic.

Maria Magdalena, recovering herself, looked at him firmly and said, **"Then the question is, what kind of world do we want to leave behind? Be-**

cause the one we have now... can no longer exist."

Solomon seemed to deflate as he sighed. **"I don't know. But if we want to change anything, we have to make a decision soon. And we have to make sure it's the right one."**

They both stared at the screen, where the Archive continued to display names and codes as if nothing had changed, as if the lives it contained were simply numbers in an equation.

Solomon continued to explore the records in the Archive of Souls, and the deeper he delved, the more disturbing the information he uncovered became. One section of data detailed the mass cloning processes carried out at the industrial complex.

According to records, the bodies were grown in bio-generation tanks and, once completed, their biological brains were replaced by robotic units integrated with the chip. This chip contained the memory of the required soldier, including skills, combat type and specific strategies. There was no impediment to creating multiple copies of the same soldier. That was why such a detailed file was kept.

The best individuals were chosen according to the needs of the buyer.

Solomon read quietly. **“Complete brain replacement. Chip implant. Customized memory transfer... It’s a factory, but not just for creating bodies... it’s for creating perfect soldiers, molded to the needs of the buyers.”**

A chill ran down his spine as he continued reading. Another revelation. Elyndria was not an isolated, self-sufficient world; there were outside buyers. A file showed a list of clients, and among them were the A-Quon, though they were not the only ones. There were dozens of factions, planets, and empires demanding soldiers with specific characteristics.

At that moment, Lyara, Julius and Maria Magdalena entered the room. Maria Magdalena had already informed them.

Julius asked, frowning. **"From your expression, I see that you discovered other things. You seem to have seen a ghost."**

Solomon answered his friend with a mixture of amazement and disdain. **-"Not ghosts, but the**

system behind all this. Listen: this continent, the one we call home, is nothing more than a factory specialized in assault troops and hand-to-hand combat. They called it... the 'Roman continent'. But we are not the only ones. There are other continents dedicated to different types of military training."

Lyara looked very interested. -"Other continents? Like which ones?"-

Solomon pointed at the screen, where a holographic map of the planet was glowing in different colors. "Here. This is the 'Dragon Continent', where troops specializing in firearms are trained. Then there is the 'Rain of Fire Continent', which produces gunners. And this last one, the 'Armored Continent', which trains armored vehicle operators."

Maria Magdalena showed a look of horror - "And all these continents are full of people like us? Resurrected, fighting again and again without knowing the truth?"

Solomon shook his head. "No. Not necessarily. It seems that most of the troops they produce

are no longer human. They are clones with robotic brains. Like the Praetorians, strong but with moderate intelligence. The revenants like us are probably special cases... used for the more specialized jobs, where they need advanced intelligence... or to supervise the troops."

Lyara expressed disbelief. "So, all our struggle... everything we've done, has been to sustain this cycle? To feed a market that trades in lives?"

Julius tried to contain a growing fury. "And those buyers... who are they?"

Solomon activated another projection to show his friends a list of alien names and symbols. He said, "Here they are. The A-Quon are just one of many. But they all have one thing in common: they demand elite soldiers, tailored to their needs. Elyndria is a supplier of war, no more, no less."

The silence in the room was heavy. Everyone processed the revelation in their own way. Finally, it was Julius who broke the silence. He said firmly, "This changes things. We can't just destroy the Fortress or escape. We have to take down the

entire system, this... death factory. We can't allow it to continue operating."

Lyara looked at the map - "But it's a monster with too many heads. How do you attack something so vast?" -

Julius responded fiercely, but not angry at Lyara, but at the situation itself. -"We won't have any problems getting troops. Don't you think so?"- His cynicism almost reached unthinkable limits.

Maria Magdalena expressed her pain in a soft voice - "We have to find a way to disable everything from within. If the Soul Archive controls everything, maybe there is a way to turn it off and collapse the system." -

Solomon shook his head as he sighed. "It won't be easy, love. This isn't just technology; it's an empire. But if we find the weak points... maybe we'll have a chance."

Julius clenched his fists. "Then we must prepare. It's not just for our freedom anymore. It's for everyone trapped in this cycle. We are not sol-

diers; we are slaves. And if this is our last fight, then let it be to destroy this hellish machine."

They all nodded in agreement, feeling the weight of the responsibility that was coming. Outside the room, the light of the three suns that illuminated the planet bathed the inner gardens of the Fortress thanks to the optical fibers, but for them, the shadow of truth had darkened everything.

Maria Magdalena walked resolutely to Logos's cell. The decision to speak to him had not been easy, but something inside her told her she had to do it. Perhaps compassion or the desire to try to redeem the irredeemable had driven her. She thought that she had been his wife, his sexual toy for more than thirty years. Perhaps some decency remained within this unrecognizable Messiah. Perhaps having shared intimacy for so long would allow her to extract some information from him, if there was anything human left within Logos.

When the guards opened the metal door, Logos was sitting in a dark corner, his wrists chained and a look of contempt on his face.

Maria Magdalena spoke to him in a calm voice. - **"Logos, I am here to offer you an opportunity. If you decide to cooperate with us, your conditions could improve. This does not have to be such a miserable end for you."**-

Logos raised his head and looked at her with a crooked smile. His eyes shone with a mixture of mockery and malevolence. He replied sarcastically. - **"You come to me? A whore who changes beds for a few coins? How has Solomon rewarded you for your betrayal? Besides penetrating you in all your holes, he will surely give you power and luxuries. Is that not what you seek? Do you speak to me of opportunities? You, the whore that I molded and treated as a queen? Do you think that you are now above me because you sleep with one of my enemies?"**-

Maria Magdalena felt a stab of pain in her soul at his words, but she tried not to be intimidated and remained calm. She said firmly. - **"Your situation can be different if you choose to cooperate. Help us understand the system, to stop this cycle of death. You might find a way to redeem yourself."**-

For an instant, it seemed as if Maria Magdalena's words had reached him. His features softened, and a shadow of reflection crossed his face. But the illusion did not last. Maria had come too close. In an unexpected move, Logos launched himself at her with the swiftness of a predator, breaking the distance that separated them.

Logos growled and shouted, **"Don't talk to me about redemption, because there is no redemption worth anything in this rotten world!"**

The struggle was brutal. Logos, still chained, managed to push her against the wall, tearing her dress in an attempt to humiliate her as he had done so many times in the past. Maria Magdalena struggled with all her might, screaming for help as she tried to free herself.

At that moment, the cell door flew open. Solomon, his face hardened with fury, entered, wielding his sword. Without hesitation, he raised the weapon and brought it down with unrelenting force against Logos' neck. The blade sank deep, nearly decapitating him. Logos' body fell heavily to the ground, his head hanging grotesquely.

Solomon whispered, panting, his voice cold. - **"That was for trying to touch her... one more time."** -

Immediately, Solomon went to Maria Magdalena, who was trembling on the ground. He wrapped her in a cloak and carefully wrapped her up, helping her to stand up.

Solomon said in a soft voice. - **"It's over, you're safe now. He won't hurt you again. Not you or anyone else."** -

Maria Magdalena hugged him tightly, letting out unshed tears. In a small voice she replied: **"Thank you... you arrived on time. I thought you might have some decency left..."**

Solomon pulled her aside to look into her eyes. **"One thing I admire about you is your ability to think something good about others, even in the worst of circumstances."**

He took Maria Magdalena to her quarters. He made sure she was calm, and returned to where Logos' body lay. Using a handheld device, he extracted the chip from Logos' consciousness, storing it in a

transport device. He looked at the device in his hands for a moment, with a mixture of revulsion and wariness. Muttering to himself, he said , **"You never know when this unhinged consciousness might come in handy... but it won't just sit here to infect anyone else."**

He ordered the guard to dispose of Logos' body. With determination, he accessed the Soul Archive system from a nearby terminal. He found the active copy of Logos' consciousness and, without hesitation, executed the command to permanently delete it. The system confirmed the action with a cold message on the screen: **" Consciousness successfully deleted. "**

He returned to the room where Maria Magdalena was, who watched him enter. She was still wrapped in the cloak he had given her.

Solomon said firmly. **"Logos is finished. His mind, his corruption... everything. He will never be able to hurt anyone again."**

She nodded, still processing what had happened, but with a renewed trust in him. Solomon lay back on the bed and pulled Maria Magdalena's body

against him, resting her on his chest. She felt protected by the security of his actions. Solomon exuded authority, security, and protection. Everything Logos lacked, Solomon had in abundance.

Over the next few weeks, Solomon's access to the system began to shed light on Elyndria's deepest secrets. As he cracked the encryptions and found passwords that gave him access to more advanced levels of the system, the four friends' amazement grew with each new revelation.

One afternoon, while Solomon was working in front of the holographic screen in one of the rooms used as a control room, Lyara and Maria Magdalena stood by his side, watching as the lines of code unfolded and converted the data into comprehensible information.

Solomon adjusted his posture, his face focused as he explained his findings. In a gravelly voice, he said, **“Here is the core of the Soul Archive. According to these records, this system began to be implemented on Earth around the year 2030. Initially, it appears to have been an experimen-**

tal initiative... something called 'Project Re-birth.'"

Lyara frowned. "On Earth? So all this technology originated on our world? How did it get here?"

Solomon explained, nodding slowly. "Exactly. Elyndria is nothing more than an extension of what they started there. Look at this... there are records of consciousnesses recorded between 2030 and 2057."

Maria Magdalena asked incredulously. "That means that all of us here... could have been born in that period? Does that include us?"

Solomon explained in a neutral tone. -"Not necessarily. These are just the first recordings. The strange thing is this thing you see here..."- He pointed to a part of the code as he spoke -"...there seems to be a protocol, or rather, references, that suggest recordings of consciousness of people who lived before 2030."-

Lyara said skeptically. "That doesn't make sense. There was no technology for that before. How

could they record consciousnesses from past eras?"

Maria Magdalena said in a tone of disbelief. - **"Could they have traveled back in time? It's the only logical explanation, isn't it?"**

Solomon paused, letting his fingers linger on the touch pad. His eyes scanned the screen, where a fragmented document mentioned something about **"chronological observation devices"**.

Solomon muttered to himself as he scanned the files. **"Maybe... there's scattered evidence, though it's incomplete. Something to do with time experiments. If these records are real, there could be time-traveling devices that could record consciousnesses from past eras. According to these documents, it was technology based on an earlier device, prepared to look at scenes from the past. The device was called... let me see... here: Chronovisor."**

Lyara said in a serious voice. **"If that's true, this is much bigger than we imagined. We're not just talking about making soldiers, but manipula-**

ting the very foundations of existence and time."

Maria Magdalena crossed her arms, staring with a mixture of fascination and fear at the holographic projections. Her voice was almost a whisper, she said, **"And how many of them are here? How many resurrected people from my time are now living in Elyndria?"**

Solomon typed rapidly into the interface, accessing a population registry for the Roman continent. In a solemn voice he said, **"According to the data, there are approximately one billion seven hundred million inhabitants on this continent. Each of them comes from consciousnesses recorded on Earth at some point in our history. From the year thirty after Christ... or around that year... there seem to be around five thousand resurrected."**

The silence that followed was overwhelming. The number was unimaginable, a colossal mass of people who had once walked the Earth and were now here, living a perpetual existence as resurrected ones.

Lyara asked in an intrigued tone. **"Can we look for someone in particular? Find out if our own relatives are here?"**

Solomon nodded as he ran a new search through the database. He explained. **"The system allows for cross-referencing genetic data and memory records. If we input names, dates, or even a simple DNA scan that's encoded in the chip, we could find out if someone we know or knew is here."**

Maria Magdalena asked with a glimmer of hope in her eyes . **"Even... relatives of ours? Someone we loved and lost?"**

Solomon looked at her seriously, sensing the emotional charge in her voice. He replied a little softer. **"It's possible, love. But keep one thing in mind: the people here are not the same ones you remember. They have evolved like us to be soldiers. Their memories may have changed... their feelings may have changed or they may no longer be what they were in life."**

Lyara took a deep breath, taking in the weight of what Solomon had just said. Maria Magdalena

looked away, pondering the implications of the technology.

Lyara mused in a determined voice. **"This isn't just a war machine. It's a machine that alters the foundations of humanity. We have to be careful what we do here, Solomon."**

Solomon nodded firmly. **"I know, Lyara. I am increasingly convinced that Elyndria is not just a prison, but a piece in a much larger game. And we need to find out who is moving the pieces."**

The discovery came as Solomon delved into the records of the Archive of Souls, attempting to decipher the system's darkest protocols. One afternoon, as he and Lyara reviewed data patterns on holographic screens, an anomaly caught their attention.

Solomon said in a curious tone. **"Look at this. Some records are... corrupted. Consciousnesses show patterns of instability that should not exist in such a precise system."**

Lyara leaned closer to the screen, watching the lines of data fluctuate, as if the system itself was unsure of how to represent them.

Lyara frowned as she interpreted the data. **"Instability? You mean errors in the recordings?"**

Solomon shook his head. **"Not exactly. This doesn't look like a glitch. It's as if these consciousnesses are aware of their situation... as if they know they're trapped here. Look at this log."** He pointed to one line in particular. **"This behavior isn't random. There are spikes that correspond to episodes of paranoia, anger, and... frustration."**

Lyara raised an eyebrow in surprise. She asked. **"Are you saying that these consciousnesses are reacting emotionally? As if they are trying to rebel?"**

Solomon nodded slowly, processing the information. Then, he entered a command into the keyboard that revealed more details about one of the unstable consciousnesses. He said in a deep voice, **"This is even stranger. This consciousness... is Logos."**

Lyara reasoned in disbelief. **- "Logos? But you destroyed his consciousness in the Archive. You erased it yourself, Solomon. Remember?" -**

Solomon replied. **"I thought so. But here he is. Fragmented, unstable... almost unrecognizable, but it's definitely him."** He pointed at the data that confirmed the identity of the consciousness they were seeing. **"It seems parts of his memory have regenerated or survived somewhere in the system."**

At that moment, Maria Magdalena and Julius entered the room, drawn by the discussion.

Julius looked at them curiously. **"What's going on? It seems like they've found something important."**

Lyara looked at him with concern. She answered. **- "It's Logos. His consciousness didn't disappear completely. It's here... but it's broken... corrupted. Fragmented." -**

Maria Magdalena paled, remembering Logos' attack and the mixed emotions that incident had left her with. Her voice trembling, she asked, **"What does**

that mean? Is it dangerous? Can he come back... somehow?"

Solomon shook his head, though not with complete conviction. He explained. **"Not in the physical sense. It would have to be recorded on a chip and then implanted into a clone with an artificial brain. What worries me is that these manifestations of paranoia and frustration we see could influence the system if left unchecked. A corrupted consciousness could disrupt the stability of the Soul Archive, even spread to other consciousnesses. Keep in mind that the user Logos is still recognizable by the system."**

Julius crossed his arms, looking at Solomon with determination as he asked, **"What do we do with him? Can we eliminate him for good this time?"**

Solomon remained silent for a few seconds, assessing the situation. Then, he entered a command that brought up a deeper analysis of Logos's status. The data confirmed that his personality was completely fragmented, his memories scattered, and his primary emotions in constant conflict.

Finally Solomon answered in a worried voice. **"We can try, but it won't be easy. These consciousnesses have self-repair mechanisms that I don't fully understand. If we remove this fragmentation, it could reappear in another sector of the system."**

Maria Magdalena took a deep breath, trying to calm herself. She said, **"Then we must make sure he can't harm anyone else. Do whatever it takes, Solomon."**

Lyara nodded, agreeing with Maria. **"Yes. We cannot allow something as dangerous as Logos to be left loose, even as an echo in the system."**

Solomon explained his concern further. **"It's as if an entire batch of consciousnesses, including Logos', are being treated differently than the rest of the resurrected..."** He then turned back to the console, typing commands rapidly. As he worked, a projection of Logos' consciousness began to materialize on one of the screens. His face was a chaotic mosaic of emotions, shifting between anger, despair, and something that almost seemed like pleading.

Logos' projection communicated through the computer's speaker. His voice was broken and distorted. **-"You couldn't kill me with your sword. And you can't erase me! I'm not a mistake, I'm the future! I'm eternal!"-**

Maria Magdalena took a step back, shuddering at the sight.

Solomon gritted his teeth, his resolve only growing stronger. He said coldly, **"No. You are but a vestige of what you once were. And your time is up."** With one last command, Logos' data began to disintegrate on the screen, reducing to unintelligible lines of code until it disappeared completely.

Solomon exhaled deeply. **"What a problem. But we must be vigilant. If there are others like him, we could face much bigger problems."**

Maria Magdalena, Lyara and Julius nodded, aware that this discovery was only the beginning of a darker truth within Elyndria.

Another secret came to light a week later, as Solomon and Lyara explored a segment of the system that seemed disconnected from the usual functions

of the Archive of Souls. The lines of code were different, more complex, and the accesses were protected with encryptions that required multiple levels of authorization. After hours of work, they managed to open an unknown interface.

An unknown name appeared on the screen, not belonging to any resurrected person: " **Elyna-1** ".

Lyara showed curiosity. -"**Elyna-1... It's not in the Soul Archive directory. What is this?**"-

Solomon looked thoughtful. "**It seems to be something different. Look at the activity patterns. It has no records associated with a physical body. It's purely virtual... but its activity is massive.**" He pointed at the active processes of the system. "**If I'm not mistaken, this thing is controlling the entire planet.**"

Lyara crossed her arms, shocked. "**The whole planet? You mean... Elyndria is completely artificial?**"

Solomon nodded doubtfully. "**It seems so. This would explain a lot of things: the constant weather, the perfectly connected underground**

structures, the impossibility of finding genuine natural resources... Elyna-1 is the artificial intelligence that keeps everything running."

Determined to get answers, Solomon entered a series of commands to try to communicate with Elyna-1. After a few seconds of waiting, a holographic projection began to materialize in the air in front of them. The figure was ethereal, with feminine features, but no defined face, like a digital ghost.

Elyna-1 spoke in a neutral, monotone voice . **"Access denied. The authority of the user identified as Solomon does not have access privileges."**

Solomon asked calmly. **"Elyna-1, I need information about this planet and your functions. What is your purpose here?"**

The figure did not respond immediately. The data on the screen seemed to fluctuate, as if processing the request, but eventually its tone changed to a more decisive one.

Elyna-1 responded impassively. **"My protocols are designed to obey Logos. His authority is the**

only one recognized in this system. Request denied."

With that statement, the projection faded away, leaving Solomon and Lyara bewildered.

Lyara frowned. **"That was... brief. She doesn't seem to want to talk to you. Why does Logos alone have authority over her?"**

Solomon tried to examine the remaining data. **"I'm not sure. But there's something more worrying. Before we went offline, I saw traces of external communication. Elyna-1 not only runs Elyndria, it also seems to be in contact with the outside world."**

Lyara asked alarmed. **"Who are you communicating with?"**

Solomon typed furiously, accessing the communication logs. After several minutes of analysis, the results appeared on the screen.

Solomon replied. **"I believe it is communicating with the A-Quon. There are regular transmissions between Elyna-1 and what appears to be**

a fleet in outer space. The data is encrypted and I cannot decipher it, but I believe this confirms that the A-Quon are somehow involved in what is happening here."

Lyara brought a hand to her chin, thinking of the implications. "If the A-Quon are in contact with Elyna-1, they may not be simple buyers. They may control this entire place... or worse."

Solomon fell silent, considering the possibilities. Then he spoke in a lower tone, as if he didn't want to accept what he was about to say. "What if... the A-Quon are an evolution of humans. Their technological and biological advancements, their interest in Elyndria... as a source of soldiers... could explain why they are so involved in this system. Perhaps they are not just buyers, but the architects of all this."

Lyara asked in disbelief. "Human evolution? You mean these beings could have been like us once?"

Solomon nodded slowly. "Think about it. It's a possibility. It would explain why a technology like the Soul Archive, which was human, ended

up expanding and capturing aliens. Elyna-1 could be the connection between them and us. If humans evolved after 2035... perhaps they expanded to other planetary systems. We need to know more. If we want to unravel this, we must find a way to gain full access to the system."

Lyara sighed, taking in the gravity of the situation . "Then we need something Logos had. His authority over Elyna-1... perhaps there is still a way to replicate it."

Solomon said cautiously. "It will be risky, but it is our best option. I have a copy of Logos that I could try to manipulate. If the A-Quon are really what we suspect, we need answers before they decide to intervene directly."

The atmosphere in the room grew even more tense. The implications of Elyna-1's discovery and its connection to the A-Quon were enormous, and Solomon knew that time was not on his side. Elyndria held secrets that could change everything.



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10 The New Humanity

The discovery occurred when Solomon, Lyara, Maria Magdalena and Julius decided to delve deeper into the system's most protected files. The encryptions were nearly impossible to break, but with each access and key combination, they discovered fragments that revealed disturbing truths. One of the most inaccessible folders was a directory called **"Specimens Alpha"**. After days of work, Solomon finally managed to access its contents.

A vast list of consciousnesses organized by species appeared on the screen. Lyara watched with a mixture of amazement and confusion.

Pointing at the screen, the woman wondered. **"These files aren't just about humans... What do these names mean? And why are they grouped by what appear to be species?"**

Maria Magdalena was reading. **"It says here Xenocanis, Morvat, A-Quon... I think they are records of non-human beings."**

Julius looked at Lyara's screen. He said in a deep voice. **-"This system doesn't just store human**

consciousnesses. It seems to also store copies of all species that have been studied or subjugated. Look at this." - He pointed to a detailed section of the directory - "These entries include genetic data, behavioral patterns, and... combat abilities."-

Maria Magdalena looked alarmed. "So, it is confirmed that they do not only make human soldiers. They can also reconstruct any other species, give them specific abilities and use them as tools of war."

Lyara crossed her arms and leaned towards the screen, focusing on the directory that mentioned the A-Quon. She said, "This doesn't make sense. The A-Quon aren't human. We've always thought of them as advanced aliens... why are they here? What connection do they have to this system?"

Julius, who was standing next to her, reasoned. "Maybe it's a copy. A backup copy. Maybe Logos was keeping a copy of the A-Quon to deal with a possible extinction catastrophe."

Solomon adjusted the search parameters, specifically filtering for A-Quon entries. What he discovered made his expression change to a mix of disbelief and gravity. In a serious tone he said to the group . -"**Look at this... The DNA records show that the A-Quon are not aliens. They are human.**"-

A heavy silence filled the room as his words echoed in the two women's minds.

Maria Magdalena pointed in disbelief. -"**Humans? That's impossible. According to the records they are completely different from us. Their biology, their technology, everything is superior...**"-

Solomon nodded slowly. **"They are, but because they evolved. According to these records, the A-Quon are descended from an Earth elite that left Earth before its collapse. They took the best of our species, adapted to extreme conditions, and advanced technologically at a rate we can't even imagine. There were evolutionary genetic changes in the original race."**

Julius said in amazement. **"That would explain why they are always one step ahead. They were not just buyers. They are the architects of this system, and they have used it to perpetuate themselves."**

- "It seems so," Lyara said, agreeing with Julius.

Over the next few weeks, Solomon continued to explore the data. He found a historical record detailing how the A-Quon had conquered vast swathes of the universe, dominating entire galaxies. Their strategy was clear: they expanded rapidly, subdued or exterminated the species they encountered, and stored their consciousnesses in systems like Elyndria.

Maria Magdalena expressed alarm. **"And why do they need an archive of their own consciousness? If they are so advanced, couldn't they reproduce like any other species?"**

Solomon answered him. **- "Here is the answer. Your species is in danger of extinction due to constant exposure to radiation. Being intergalactic travelers, your DNA has degraded. You have reached a point where you can no longer**

reproduce naturally. This archive is your only means of perpetuation. They copy your consciousnesses and transfer them to new bodies designed in factories such as this one."-

Lyara said with a frown. "So, this whole complex... all of Elyndria... isn't just for creating soldiers. It's part of a larger system, which also serves to preserve the A-Quon."

Maria Magdalena opined grimly , "Which means they are not going to give this up easily. This place is essential to their survival."

Solomon leaned back in his chair, letting out a heavy sigh as he processed the implications of his discovery. He voiced his opinion. **"This changes everything. If the A-Quon are evolved humans, then we are facing what we could become. Their history could be our future, and I'm not sure that's something I want to allow."**

Lyara, a glint of determination in her eyes, said, "If they are so desperate to preserve their species, then they will have to face us. This system gives them power, but it also makes them vulne-

able. If we learn to control it, we could change the balance."

Julius wasn't against it, but he did bring up his idea about the A-Quon's military power with a warning tone. **"But don't underestimate those who have conquered galaxies. If they realize we've taken this, they'll come for us with everything they've got."**

Maria Magdalena said. **"Which brings us to this: Elyna-1 has been communicating with them. If that AI doesn't know we took Elyndria, it at least knows Logos is no longer in power. And it must have communicated that."**

Solomon nodded, aware of the risks. He knew they had unraveled a monumental secret, but he also knew that with each answer came new questions and greater dangers. Elyndria was not just an artificial planet; it was a crucial cog in the A-Quon's plan for domination. And now they were a direct threat to that plan.

After a few days in which the tension in the Fortress was palpable, Solomon, Julius, Lyara and Maria Magdalena were in the command room, wat-

ching with concern as the main screens showed an incoming transmission from the A-Quon. It was the first time they had directly manifested themselves since they had taken control of the planet, and the moment did not bode well.

The figure of an A-Quon appeared on the screens: tall, imposing, with features that mixed humanity with something strangely alien. His eyes shone with a metallic intensity, and his voice rang out with a cold, authoritative tone.

The A-Quon said, **"We seek to communicate with Logos. His presence is required to continue troop production."**

Solomon stepped forward to speak, his face hardened by the weight of the situation. **"Logos is dead. Elyndria is no longer under his control. We are the rulers of this world now."**

The A-Quon leader tilted his head slightly, as if assessing the answer. He replied, **"Interesting. The absence of Logos alters our projections, but it does not change reality. This planet is a factory designed to serve us. You, as regents, have one function: to continue production."**

Lyara spoke defiantly. **"We are not their slaves. Elyndria is a world with many problems. We will not continue to fuel a war that is not ours."**

The A-Quon remained impassive, but the gleam in his eyes intensified. **"Resistance is futile. Just as Logos' initial resistance to serving us was futile. Our fleet surrounds this planet. And we possess military might that outweighs any attempt at defense. If you do not comply, we will take complete control and wipe out every living thing on Elyndria. This is not a negotiation."**

Maria Magdalena clenched her fists, trying to remain calm. She stepped forward, speaking in a measured tone. **"And if we comply with your demand? Will you leave us alone? Or will we remain your pawns, subject to your will?"**

The A-Quon leader smiled slightly, though the expression lacked warmth. **"We assembled the planet and built it as a factory, but we are in no way interested in dominating such a primitive planet. That is why we agreed with Logos our deal as a provider. Comply, and you will maintain your existence. That is more than many**

species have received from us. However, your fate will always be tied to ours. You are useful. As long as you remain useful, you will live."

Julius, who had remained silent until then, stepped forward with a grim look. **"And if we don't, how much time do you give us before we are destroyed?"**

The A-Quon leader raised a hand, and images of their intergalactic ships appeared on the screens. Huge constructions that housed endless rows of soldiers created in factories similar to Elyndria, gigantic war machines, and ships that could darken the skies of entire planets.

The A-Quon said, **"These ships are in their star quadrant. You have two local cycles to decide. You will not need more."**

The transmission cut off abruptly, leaving an oppressive silence in the room. Solomon slammed his fist on the table in frustration. **"We cannot give in. This only perpetuates their rule. But if we resist, we condemn Elyndria to extinction."**

Lyara said bitterly, **"It's a game we can't win. For now. But if we give in, how long will it be before they destroy this planet anyway?"**

Maria Magdalena crossed her arms, her mind working rapidly. **"If we accept, we at least buy time. We may be able to find a way to undermine their control from within, but first we need to make sure Elyndria isn't destroyed."**

Julius nodded slowly. **"It's a horrible choice, but it's the only one that leaves us room to maneuver. We must accept... for now."**

Solomon looked at his companions, his eyes reflecting the internal struggle he felt. Finally, with a deep sigh, he nodded. **"Alright. We will accept, but only as long as we find a way to free this planet from their yoke. Elyndria will not be an eternal factory for them. This must be temporary."**

The four sealed their decision with an exchange of glances. They had reluctantly given in, but deep in their hearts they knew that this was not a final decision, but the beginning of a plan to resist.

Soldier production began again. In the weeks that followed, the tension in the Fortress was palpable. Solomon stood before the main panel of the Archive of Souls, his hand shaking over the command that would initiate the total destruction of the system. His eyes burned with rage as his voice echoed through space. He said, **"This has to stop! This damn archive is the root of everything. If the A-Quon depend on it to sustain themselves, then destroying it is our only option."**

Maria Magdalena walked towards him with quick steps, placing a firm hand on his arm before he decided to act. **"Wait, Solomon! Think about what you are about to do. This file contains not only copies of them, but of all of us. There are unique human consciousnesses that were never reincarnated. If you destroy the file, you will be killing them permanently."**

Solomon looked at her, his jaw set. The rage in his eyes mixed with the internal struggle that was running through him. He replied, **"So what? Those are just fragments of people who have already died. What matters is that we eliminate the A-**

Quon before they destroy all that is left of Elyndria."

Maria Magdalena shook her head, her voice calm. She knew how to reason with her husband. **"They are not just fragments. Think about this: if a copy has not been reborn, it is a potential life that can still exist. And there is something else... Have you ever considered that an identical copy is not the same person? If there are two consciousnesses from the same origin, each is an individual being that feels, thinks and evolves differently. Ethically, we cannot simply erase these lives because we are angry."**

Lyara, who had remained silent until that moment, crossed her arms, watching the two of them with a frown. She said, **"She's right, Solomon. It's not just about the A-Quon. If we wipe them out like this, what does that make us compared to them? We'd be just like those who have enslaved us for centuries."**

Julius tried to remain neutral, something very difficult given the situation the four friends were going through. With a somber tone he expressed his opi-

nion. -"I understand what you say, Lyara, but I also understand Solomon. The A-Quon have us in their hands. If we don't do something radical, they will continue to use us for their endless war."-

Maria Magdalena turned to Julius, her determination coming from her ethical analysis. **"Radical does not mean irresponsible, Julius. We are responsible for millions of lives besides the A-Quon. Destroying the archive is an irreversible act. There is another option that seems viable to me: find some key that allows us to control 'Elyna-1' and subdue it. If we manage to control it, we can open the restricted files, and disconnect the A-Quon without destroying the rest of the human consciousness. Elyna-1 must have some emergency protocol or a master password that we can use. Even Solomon kept a copy of Logos' memory. We can try to hack it."**

Julius looked at her skeptically. **"And how do you propose we find the master password or something? Even hacking Logos' memory might**

be impossible. The Elyndria system is a labyrinth. It could take us years."

Maria Magdalena turned to Julius and Solomon, her face full of conviction. **"If there's one thing we know about Elyndria, it's that it was designed with complex but logical protocols. Logos depended on Elyna-1, and if the A-Quon use it too, then there's a link we can trace. I'm sure there must be some key hidden somewhere in the system, encrypted, perhaps, but accessible with the right tools. And its access must have been continuous and intensive. We'll be able to track it."**

Solomon looked down at the panel, deep in thought and breathing deeply as he processed his wife's words. Finally, he took his hand off the keyboard, showing that he was re-evaluating the entire situation. He took a step back, moving away from the computer. Finally he said, **"Okay. I think you're right. We'll look for that key. But if we don't find a solution soon, I don't rule out that we'll have to destroy everything. The A-Quon can't keep using Elyndria as their war factory."**

And we can't keep producing lives for no other purpose than to die for the A-Quon."

Lyara sighed in relief and took a step towards them.
-**"Then we need to start right now. Julius, you and I will track down any connections Elyna-1 has with the main system and the A-Quon. Maria, you and Solomon can search the historical archives. If there is a master protocol to hack, it must be in the original system records."**-

Julius nodded. **"Then we have a plan. But we must remain vigilant. If the A-Quon suspect what we are doing, they will not hesitate to act. Keep in mind that Elyna-1 communicates regularly with the A-Quon."**

Maria Magdalena placed a hand on Solomon's shoulder, a light smile softening the tense atmosphere. **"We'll always be in this together, Solomon. We'll make the right decision, but first we need to make sure we have all the information."**

Solomon nodded slowly, some remnants of fury still visible in his eyes, but now mixed with renewed determination. He simply said, **"Let's do it."**

The group quickly dispersed, each with a role to play in the new mission. There was uncertainty about whether they would find a solution as quickly as they wanted, but also the hope that there was still a way to save Elyndria without condemning all the reborn to oblivion.

Over the next two months, the massive opening of files and communications revealed hidden aspects that hinted at the true nature of the Elyndria project. This left the group in a state of shock and disquiet. Gathered in the command room, the four rebels stood in front of the screens, which projected a three-dimensional map of the universe near the planet. The map occupied the center of the room, of a size that allowed the four regents of the Fortress to walk inside it. Julius reviewed the downloaded data while Lyara, Maria Magdalena and Solomon silently observed the gigantic simulation.

Finally, Julius broke the silence. **“This... isn’t just Elyndria. Look.”** He pointed to a projection of interconnected galaxies. **“The core of the system doesn’t just rule this planet. It’s linked to an immense network, with entire planetary systems at different points in the universe. It can’t**

be seen if this fortress is the central base of the system... or a component of others..."

Lyara spun around, watching the constellations, galaxies, and planetary systems flying around the room. In a disbelieving tone, she asked, **"You mean there are more worlds like Elyndria? More planets or factories filled with consciousnesses trapped in experiments?"**

Julius nodded slowly, running a hand through his hair as he organized the data. **"Exactly. According to the records I'm opening, each of these planets was designed to test different types of societies under A-Quon control. Some are military, like this one. Others are civilian, even artistic or scientific. It's a fucking laboratory on a galactic scale."**

Maria Magdalena crossed her arms, frowning as she processed the information. **"And what kind of society is this? A militarized dystopia? Besides providing them with soldiers, did Elyndria have other purposes? Were you hoping to learn something from here?"**

Julius made a face of bewilderment. "I don't know exactly, Maria. But it seems that Elyndria was created to perfect war strategies. That's why the A-Quon have such enormous military power. They've been using this place to develop tactics, technologies, and soldiers. Perhaps the other stations allow them to generate cheap labor for the worlds they conquer."

Solomon growled in frustration. "And all the while, they kept us in ignorance, fighting and serving as pieces in their game."

Lyara took a step towards Julius, looking at the screens with growing interest. "And this universe we're in... Is there any way to tell if it's Earth's? I mean, is what we're seeing a simulation or a real environment?"

Julius gave a bitter smile as he replied. "It's real. This map shows suns, planetary systems, galaxies, and galaxy clusters, all connected in some way to the nodes of the A-Quon. Elyndria is just one of many worlds in this network."

Maria Magdalena raised an eyebrow, her voice laced with skepticism. "Are you saying that the A-

Quon control not only Elyndria, but potentially entire galaxies?"

Julius nodded. "Exactly, this tells us what's in the system. Though I'm not sure to what extent they have absolute control. This part of the system seems designed to inform, not to control or govern factories directly."

Solomon spoke harshly , "It doesn't matter what we can discover here. What matters is what we do with this information. How can we use it to stop them?"

Julius replied thoughtfully, "Well... if Elyndria's network is connected to other factory planets, then any action we take here could have repercussions throughout the network. But it also means that if we try to rebel, we could face a coordinated response from all of their resources."

Maria Magdalena bowed her head, her eyes shining with a mixture of concern and determination. "It's a risk, but we should look at our opportunities. If we can gain access to this external network, we could seek out allies. Perhaps there are ot-

her worlds that also suffer from the A-Quon's control."

Lyara was a bit skeptical. "Allies? We don't know what those other planets are like. They might be even more loyal to the A-Quon than this place."

Maria Magdalena replied. "Or they might be as desperate as we are to free themselves. We cannot rule out the possibility. We always have the opportunity to make known what we know to the two hundred races that inhabit Elyndria. I understand that they are not the original races. They are copies like us. But at some point the core of the psyche that governs their artificial brains has points in common with the species to which they belonged."

Julius gave his opinion on the matter. -"I must admit that you may be right, Maria. From what we have discovered so far, we are clones of the real humans of Earth. I don't know about you, but I 'feel' human. And I identify with them as their equal. Despite everything I know now, I feel like I am the original Julius, the one who

was once born and lived on a planet called Earth."-

Solomon slammed his fist on the table, interrupting the conversation. "I understand what you're saying, Julius. But we can't just speculate any longer. We're in the middle of a military operation, whether we like it or not. And we need something concrete. Julius, my friend... tell me, can you find out if there's some way to cut the connection between Elyndria and the rest of this network? If the A-Quon rely on communication between these worlds, disconnecting them could weaken their control."

Julius nodded, turning his attention back to the screens. "I'll try. But this system is incredibly intricate. It might take me some time."

Maria Magdalena placed a hand on Solomon's shoulder. "Solomon, we can't just rush this. Every decision we make here could mean the difference between freeing ourselves or condemning us to something worse. The A-Quon may be watching our access to the system."

Solomon stared at her for a few seconds as his expression softened slightly. **“Fine. But I’m not going to sit back and do nothing. If we have even the slightest chance of hitting the A-Quon, I want to be ready.”**

The group dispersed again, each focused on their own tasks. While Julius investigated the network, Solomon, Lyara, and Maria Magdalena began to plot possible strategies. Although they knew the road ahead would be difficult, they also felt that, for the first time, they had a real chance to change the fate of not only Elyndria, but the entire system under the control of the A-Quon.

After a certain time, the delivery deadline for the batch of soldiers requested by the A-Quon was approaching.

Solomon stood in front of a terminal, sweating, his eyes fixed on the screen as his mind raced. He had managed to penetrate another layer of security in the system, something that had taken him days of effort and numerous failed attempts. Now, at last, he had access to information that gave him hope that he could change everything.

The room was silent except for the dull clicking of keyboards and illuminated screens reflecting the shadows of everyone's tense faces.

Solomon muttered to himself. **"Come on... This has to be it... Ah, there it is."**

Julius had approached quietly, seeing the gleam in Solomon's eyes. He asked, **"Did you do it?"**

Solomon nodded, not looking away from the screen. **"Yes... I managed to hack the final layer of security. It was locked, but I found a crack in Logos's archive that allowed me to find his superuser key. I now have access to the A-Quon records. And most importantly, I can control Elyna-1."**

Lyara walked forward with a firm step, and Maria Magdalena watched from a distance. They both knew what this meant: crucial information, possibly the key to overthrowing the A-Quon's rule.

Lyara intervened. **"What did you find, Solomon? What are they hiding from us?"** Her voice was filled with excitement.

Solomon began browsing through the system files, opening a series of recordings and documents that seemed incredibly old. As he sifted through the data, the narrative unfolded before him.

Solomon stammered slowly as he took in the information, bit by bit. **- "This... this we already knew: it's an experiment. Elyndria, this entire planet, was created with a dual purpose: to design a perfect civilization, a civilization based on absolute control. And to generate soldiers for their expansion into the universe. The A-Quon have been testing societies where they have intelligent soldiers, with enhanced war capabilities, as if they were pieces on a chessboard." -**

Maria Magdalena stared in disbelief at the screen that displayed a mix of reports, videos and voiceovers generated by artificial intelligence.

Solomon looked at her and nodded, as if he knew what she was thinking. He continued. **“And according to these records, the A-Quon have been perfecting this experiment for centuries. They want to create the perfect civilization,**

using beings like us, manipulated and programmed to be more efficient. Total control, from the military to society itself. It is a means of populating conquered planets with loyal individuals."

Julius tried to contain his anger. "It's a dictatorship... absolute control over everything."

Nodding at his friend's observation, Solomon continued. "What concerns me is something even more puzzling." He paused, searching for more records. "Here it is... it seems that Elyndria is not just anywhere in the universe. The A-Quon have no way of knowing exactly where in the cosmos Earth is located. In their records, they have lost any reference to our planet."

Lyara asked confused. "How can that be? Are they saying that they are somewhere else in the universe and can't track the location of Earth?"

Solomon said. "Exactly. The navigation system can't find Earth anywhere on the star map. They've tried, but there's... something limiting the information. They can't trace its origin, and

according to their calculations, they don't even know if Earth still exists."

It seemed that the A-Quon civilization and the planet Elyndria itself had evolved millions of years in relation to the history of the Earth. It was even possible that the original solar system of the Earth had ceased to exist. They could simply be in a remote sector of the Milky Way or... outside of it. There were no nearby reference points that were recognizable by the system. Traces of the Earth, if it still existed... were not locatable.

Maria Magdalena sighed, her thoughts swinging between disbelief and hope. She asked, **"What does that mean? Does it mean that the Earth no longer exists? Or that we have been separated from them, somehow, without being able to meet again?"**

Solomon replied, shocked. With his gaze fixed on the screen, he tried to express himself carefully to avoid damaging his friends' psyche. **-"Mmmm... I don't know. But what is certain is that, if the Earth is still there, it is out of our reach. Not even the A-Quon can access that information.**

But there is another possibility..." - He hesitated a little before continuing.

Lyara and Maria Magdalena reacted in unison. - **"What? What are you thinking? Solomon?"**-

Solomon cleared his throat before continuing. **"Maybe... and this is just a hypothesis... Maybe Earth has never existed. Maybe it's a fabulous story to give us reborn an identity... An origin, a common past as a civilization..."**

Solomon's opinion had a devastating impact. Julius asked, **"So, from what you're saying, we're trapped in this place, in this web, and everything we think about ourselves is a lie built into our brains?"**

A heavy silence filled the room. The four of them looked at each other, as the weight of the truth fell upon them. The hope of returning or at least seeing Earth seemed increasingly distant, if not impossible.

Solomon said. -**"I'm sorry, guys. But that's just speculation. Nothing in the system tells us that our personal stories are generated by computers. It's just an idea that crossed my mind.**

Among so many lies... maybe our lives are too..."-

Lyara tried to reason. "But... if Earth still exists, how can we regain contact with it? How can we know if there are more humans out there, if the A-Quon have no idea where we are?"

Maria Magdalena tried to reason. -"Without a hint of anything known, a set of galaxies, a planetary system... whatever... We have no way of knowing where we are. Maybe it's true that we're in a different universe than Earth. Maybe the A-Quon evolved so much that they can go from universe to universe. Solomon, in one of our talks you explained to me that humans had developed the theory of... what was it like? Multiverse. We have to keep looking. If we manage to open the information archives enough, we might find some clue of Earth. If it's true that the A-Quon evolved millions of years ago... the information in the system must be fabulous... Maybe it will take us thousands of years to decode it."-

Solomon explained, resigned but determined. **"I'm going to keep looking. If there's anything we can do to locate Earth, I will."**

Maria Magdalena nodded slowly. **"We'll make it, Solomon. No matter what we have to do. We can't let this end like this."**

The light from the screen illuminated their faces as the decision was made: they would keep searching, they would keep fighting. Despite the darkness that loomed over them, there was a spark of hope, a chance to find something beyond the walls of Elyndria. Something that could give them back what they had lost.

A few days later, Solomon stood alone in the control room, surrounded by flickering screens and messy cables. The air was thick with tension, and his breathing grew heavier as he continued to analyze Logos's memory.

Within the system, there was a utility that was an experimental weapon of the A-Quon, designed to deactivate the chips that controlled the inhabitants of Elyndria, including the network of soldiers and clones. If someone activated it, the liberation of all

the reborn beings would be possible, but at a very high cost. Clones like the Praetorians would cease to exist. And death would be final, because there would be no new rebirths.

Solomon thought quietly as he watched the show.
"This... this could free us. But at what price? Is it fair? Are we really willing to lose the clones? Should we really consider them 'non-human'?"

The app operated within the heart of the system. According to the records, its function was a key to deactivate the chips in the brains of the inhabitants of Elyndria, freeing them from any control. No more 'blackouts', no more recording of experience... but no more resurrections."

He stared at the screen for a few more minutes. Surely neither he, nor Maria Magdalena, nor Lyara, nor Julius would ever activate it. But his intention was to keep it safe. It could always be used by the A-Quon. The problem was that he needed to have access with higher privileges to Elyna-1.

Searching through Logos' recorded memory was an exhaustive and methodical job that would take him... **years?** Accessing it with higher privileges

would allow him to control Elyna-1... but also restrict the A-Quon.

For the millionth time, he began to apply the algorithms he had discovered. In his mind, the possibilities opened up before him like a map full of interconnected paths. Using the code from Logos' memory as a base, he built an alternative bridge to the core of the system, specifically to Elyna-1, the AI that controlled the entire planet.

A couple of hours later, a message appeared on the screen: **"Full access to Elyna-1 . "**

Solomon lost his breath. In amazement and relief he exclaimed. **"I did it... I did it."**

She felt the air around her move again. They were in control now. Elyna-1 would obey them.

Quickly, using the newly gained access, he executed several commands to lock down the A-Quon. He cut off their access to the system and shut down the outgoing communications that kept them informed. At that moment, the vast A-Quon control network that had dominated the planet and its inhabitants began to dismantle as the accesses to the communi-

cation ports were closed one after another. The screens showed a flashing green light, signaling that the A-Quon system had been neutralized.

However, the result was not as straightforward as he had anticipated.

A signal on the monitor warned him of a base far away in space. Through it, the A-Quon had been sending communications. Now they had been completely interrupted. An automated message arrived at the terminal.

- "ACTIVATING ALERTS!" -

Julius was just entering the room at that moment. He looked at the screens. **- "What's going on? Did you do it?" -**

Solomon nodded, his expression grave. **"Yes, I did. We have gained control over Elyna-1. And the A-Quon cannot control the system. But... not everything is so simple, as you can see."**

Suddenly, a new message appeared, but this time it came from the A-Quon.

- "CONTROL HAS BEEN LOCKED. RESETTING HIGH PRIORITY." -

Maria Magdalena had entered the room followed by Lyara. Julius's wife exclaimed. **- "It can't be! The ships that control the Elyndria system are activating!" -**

Maria Magdalena asked urgently, **"What are we going to do? They will attack us! Do we know how much time we have?"**

Solomon ran to another control panel and frantically pressed buttons. **"The nearest A-Quon base is a couple million kilometers from here. Several months' distance separates us. But if they activate their emergency protocols, they can take control of their ships at any time. We need to move quickly and sabotage their forces before they realize what's happening."**

Julius gave his point of view. **- "We can't fight their army with just the four of us. Our planet is too primitive. We need something else. We need... something to give them the finishing blow. Or failing that... we need time to prepare for the confrontation." -**

Solomon looked around. The only advantage they had was Elyna-1, but with the A-Quon base awakening, time was short, only a few days.

Solomon analyzed. **"We don't have many options, but we can use Elyna-1 to disconnect their communication systems outside of our system. And to block their operation. As far as their systems are concerned, this base IS an A-Quon base. That will prevent information from reaching the A-Quon central government, wherever that is. We can put their weapons and soldiers into hibernation. If we succeed, that gives us a window, but..."** He paused for a moment, seeing the seriousness on the faces of the others **"But we need to act fast. The A-Quon are relentless. If we fail, we're history."**

Lyara's face hardened, she said. **"We will not fail. If there is something we must do, we will do it."**

Solomon activated the program that initiated the defense protocol. Elyna-1 began processing the data rapidly, connecting to the planet's defense systems and space bases. The A-Quon were unwitting-

gly in a race against time, and every second that passed was crucial.

Solomon confirmed. -**"Ready... Now, we just have to wait."**-

In space, the A-Quon ships were beginning to awaken. Their soldiers were already on their feet, preparing to begin whatever extermination operation they were ordered to undertake.

Maria Magdalena sat in front of the control screens, her fingers dancing over the keys as her mind processed the implications of the recent findings. The room was silent, only interrupted by the soft hum of the systems in operation. Lyara, Julius, and Solomon stood by her side, waiting.

Solomon, meanwhile, was bringing them up to date on the latest developments. Exploring Logos' only memory to gain control of the Elyna-1 AI had revealed some interesting things. **"What I've discovered so far... it doesn't make sense. Logos is not what we thought. He's not a human leader... he's a machine."**

Maria Magdalena asked , **"What do you mean by that?"**

Solomon activated a link and Logos' image appeared on the screen, his face serene and his eyes expressionless. He was nothing more than a figure, a facade that had taken the form of what the inhabitants of Elyndria knew as the leader. However, the system's readings indicated something much darker.

The rebel general said. **"What we're looking at is not a human consciousness. It's... it's an advanced android. Programmed by the A-Quon. Records indicate that the contents of its brain chip are not of human origin. Its consciousness is an artificial construct. It was given parameters to make it resemble the consciousness of the Christ of Earth, but its true consciousness was never human."**

Julius said in disbelief, **"What? So everything we believed about Logos... was an illusion?"**

Maria Magdalena seemed to agree when she chimed in. **"So it seems. I knew the original Jesus. He had nothing to do with the Logos we knew on this planet."**

Solomon continued to explain. "The A-Quon took Christ's memories, or rather, what was left of them with his time-traveling equipment, modified them for their own purposes, and eventually implanted them into a chip and a revenant. The idea was, apparently, that his reputation preceded him. Almost no one would oppose his leadership. Logos was thus designed to be a leader, but he was not self-aware. He was just a system programmed to follow orders. A gadget."

Lyara looked at Maria Magdalena as she spoke. "That explains a lot. How do we know this is true? This seems like an ocean of lies."

Solomon replied, "Because in order to gain access to Elyna-1 I had to access the Logos system records, her own thoughts, if you can call them that. Everything she has said, all the direction she has given us, has been programming. Her consciousness has never been more than a reflection of an implanted program."

The room fell silent. The magnitude of the revelation hit home. But there was something else, something that didn't fit.

Julius asked, **"If Logos was not real, what about Christ consciousness? How is it possible that the A-Quon..."** He did not finish the sentence.

Maria Magdalena nodded slowly, interrupting Solomon. She said, **"The A-Quon have the technology to travel through time. They have been collecting human consciousness from before 2035, the year they began creating the Archive of Souls. They are extracting memories and consciousness from humans who existed before the fall of the Earth. They have been preserving the minds of ancient humans, as if they were objects to be studied or used. I myself am an example."**

Julius asked, **"Do you know if the humans who existed before the planet collapsed are... are they stored here? In the Archive of Souls?"**

Maria Magdalena, who had been browsing through the individual files, was the one to answer. **-"Yes. But not everything is so simple. If the A-Quon**

have the ability to travel in time, they could continue collecting consciousnesses, manipulate the temporal flow. In some way, they have hijacked the history of humanity. And they have deceived us into believing that we are the last." -

The weight of the truth became more palpable. As far as they knew, Earth had been extinct... perhaps thousands of years ago. Not only that, but the A-Quon had manipulated the fate of humanity, condemning all humans to live as copies, as echoes of what they once were.

Lyara said with a trembling voice - **"So... there is no hope of finding original humans anymore? We are just... their memories, their fragments."**
-

Maria Magdalena nodded sadly. **"Exactly. And if what we discovered is true, the A-Quon have no intention of allowing us to move forward. They are using us. Humanity, as we knew it, is gone. And now we are the last vestige of that civilization."**

Solomon opined. -"If the A-Quon have the technology to travel through time, we have a chance to bring back human civilization. We need it to revive the original consciousnesses. We no longer have a chance because we were modified on this planet. But we can recreate humans in original conditions to give them back what was stolen from them. If we don't, the civilization of the original Earth will be lost." -

Maria Magdalena said , "That's true. But that won't be easy. They have absolute control. We're facing a race with unlimited power, with technology that surpasses us in every way. We can't win with our own strength alone. We need all the people of Elyndria to join this cause."

Maria Magdalena's proposal was simple. If the primary attack by ships near the planet was stopped, it would take a few hundred years for the A-Quon to reach Elyndria. The four of them could direct the course of the local civilization, generate the necessary armies for themselves, build the necessary resources, and evolve. Perhaps they could capture the enemy ships nearby.

Solomon, Maria Magdalena, Julius and Lyara were still deliberating when a message from Elyna-1 reached the screens:

- "EMERGENCY PROTOCOL ACTIVE. A-QUON TROOPS STATIONARY IN PERMANENT HIBERNATION." -

They now had a few hundred years before they faced the A-Quon.

END

“Memories Of A Dead World”



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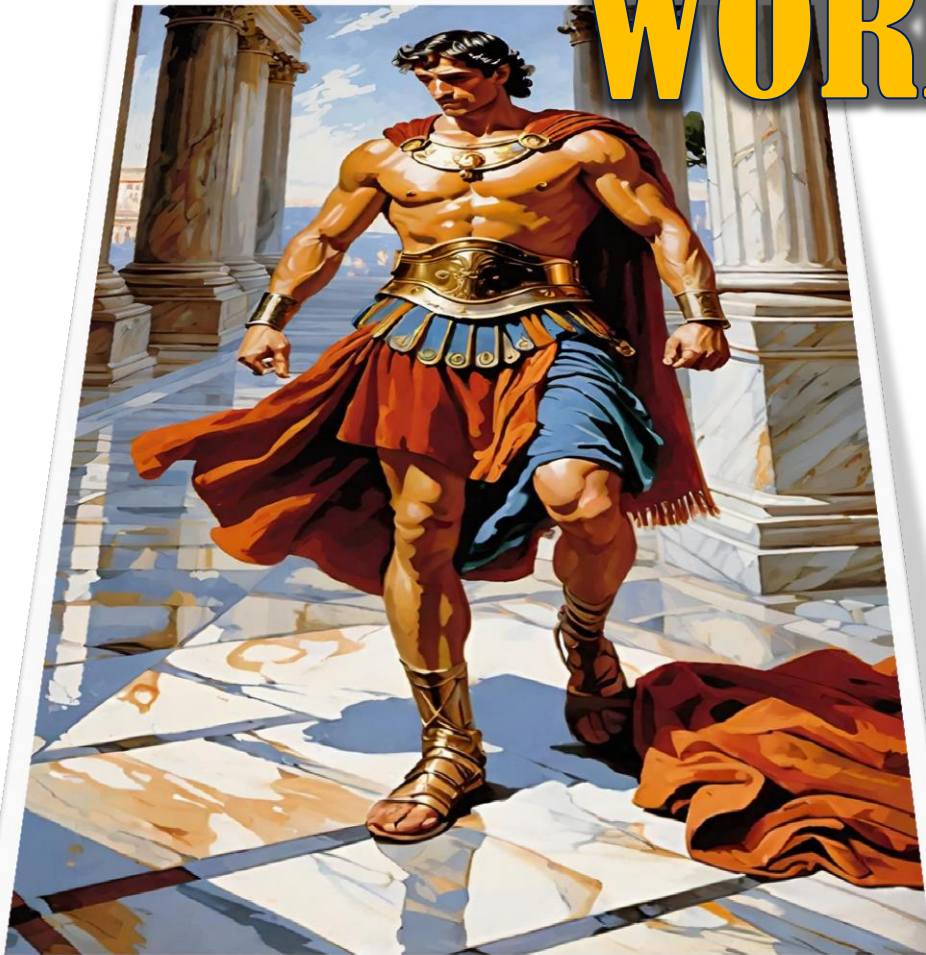
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Memories of a DEAD WORLD



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